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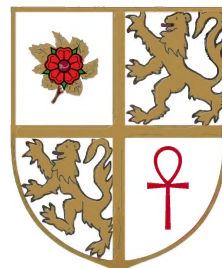
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THE MELIKS OF EASTERN ARMENIA

A Preliminary Study

One of the most interesting developments of Armenian history was the rise of the melik dynasties, which flourished in eastern Armenia under Persian suzerainty during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These princely houses, sovereign in their own territory, represented the last remnants of the elaborate social structure originating on the Armenian plateau, which manifests itself so clearly in the Armenian sources and which has been so thoroughly described by Toumanoff¹. Who were these melik houses and where did they originate? Despite the well-known letter of the meliks to Pope Innocent XI published in a French translation as early as 1818², and despite the well-known adventures of Israel Ori³, David Bek⁴ and Joseph Emin⁵, all of whom were connected in one way or another with the meliks, little is known about these families, and their origin and genealogy remain remarkably obscure. What does seem clear, however, is their connection with the social structure of a much earlier time.

The history of ancient and medieval Armenia is marked by the striking persistence of an aristocratic society dating back to pre-Urartian times; a federation of dynastic princes predating the formation of both the superdynastic monarchies of Urartu and Armenia. During the Armenian period the higher level of this aristocracy was composed of various princely dynasties ruling the different lands out of which the Armenian state was formed, while the lower level consisted of the landed gentry living within these lands subject to the dynastic princes above them. These princes, descended from the Armenian (as well as non-Armenian) tribal chieftains of remote antiquity, were

¹ C. TOUMANOFF, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington, D.C., 1963), p. 33-273.

² J. SAINT-MARTIN, *Mémoires historiques et géographiques sur l'Arménie* (Paris, 1818), vol II, p. 479-487, and for the original in Armenian : G. EZOV, *Snosheniya Petra Velikago s Armjanami Dokumenty* (St. Petersburg, 1898).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ M. F. BROSSET, *Collection d'historiens arméniens* (St. Petersburg, Imp. de l'Acad. Imp. des Sciences, 1874), vol. II, p. 222-256.

⁵ Joseph EMIN, *Life and Adventures* (Calcutta, 1918), edited by his great-great granddaughter Amy Apar.

rulers of autonomous principalities possessing complete fiscal, administrative and judicial authority over their subjects. They were not vassals of the monarchy, which they ante-dated, while the attempts of the Armenian monarchy to reduce them to vassalage and their own counter-attempts to resist this subjugation, created much tension in the Armenian state and accounted, in large part, for its weakness.

If the princely dynasts ante-dated the Armenian monarchy, they also survived it. Toumanoff has identified sixty-four separate princely houses of old Armenia which he has tentatively grouped into thirty-six dynasties ⁶. Not all of these houses and dynasties existed at the same time, however, old ones becoming extinct and new ones forming as branches from others, but the decline in their numbers is as clear as it was continuous. In the time of the Arsacid monarchy (third to fourth centuries), there appear to have been fifty princely houses belonging to twenty-nine dynasties. By about 400, however, there were only forty-two belonging to 28; by c. 500 thirty-five belonging to twenty-two and by c. 800 twenty belonging to twelve. At the beginning of the Bagratid Monarchy (885) eleven houses are known but by the end of this period (1064) only six remain and by the end of the Cilician kingdom (1375) only five continued to exist. Of these five, the Bagratids, Amatunid-Vachutians and Pahlavids survived only in Georgia, while the Mamikonids survived both in Georgia (until its sovietization) and in Armenia (as the Liparitid-Orbelian dynasty of Siwnik' until the early fifteenth century) ⁷. The fifth house, the Princes of Siwnik', were the last of the Armenian dynastic houses to survive on Armenian soil, existing, as we shall see, in several branches whose chiefs reigned as « meliks » in eastern Armenia until 1813. These branches of the house of Siwnik' thus survived the rest of their princely caste in Armenia by nearly four-hundred years and at least two of these branches survive to this day.

Not enough research has been done on the House of Siwnik' and even less on the melik dynasties in part descended from it. Indeed, the entire question of the meliks and their territories requires further investigation. For too long Raffi's study ⁸ has been the main source-

⁶ TOUMANOFF, *ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ RAFFI, *Xamsayi melik'ut'iwnnerə; Larabali astlagētə; Galtnik'n Larabali* (Vienna, 1906).

book available on the subject in the West and, with the sole exception of Amy Apar's abridged version of Raffi's work, published as an appendix to volume two of her edition of the autobiography of her great-great grandfather, Joseph Emin (1918)⁹, there has been nothing in a western language upon this interesting subject. Even more curious has been the dearth of travel literature on Karabagh and Siwnik' for with one or two isolated exceptions, none of the scores of travellers who journeyed through Armenia after the seventeenth century ever set foot in this area. The purpose of this study is to survey the main aspects of the subject of the meliks, their status, their lands, their origins and genealogies; based on the framework contained in Raffi on the epigraphic materials gathered by pseudo-Beknazariantz¹⁰ and Barkhudarian¹¹, on the geographical information of Hakobian¹² the sociological studies of Toumanoff¹³ and the genealogical and other information gathered through my researches at the Matenadaran.

I. EASTERN ARMENIA

The eastern part of the Armenian plateau is a still higher plateau whose center forms the basin of Lake Sevan. This plateau is separated on the southwest from the rest of Armenia by the deep ravine carved by the lower middle course of the Arax River, while on the north and east it descends rapidly to the broad basin of the River Kur. Like the rest of Armenia, this higher plateau is very mountainous and cut into small valleys by the mountain torrents, large and small, which fall into the Arax and the Kur. The northern part of the plateau is the narrowest portion and is almost completely occupied by the basin of Lake Sevan. The southern part is wider and is neatly divided into two parts by the valleys of the rivers Orotan and Hagaru (Ałuan/Aran). The western region, roughly between the Orotan, the Arax and Lake Sevan, formed the ancient Armenian land of Siwnik'; the

⁹ *Supra*, n. 5.

¹⁰ D'après BEKNAZARIANTZ, *Galtnik' Larabati* (St. Petersburg, 1886).

¹¹ S. BARKHUDARIAN, « Gelark'unik'i melik'nerø u tanutererø øst Tat'ewi vank'i mi p'astat'it'i », *Banber Matenadarani* 8 (Erevan, 1967), p. 191-227.

¹² T. X. HAKOPIAN, *Hayastani patmakan ašxargagrut'yun*, 2nd ed. (Erevan, 1968), p. 387-393.

¹³ *Supra*, n. 1.

eastern, roughly between the Hagaru and the basis of the Kur, formed the land of Arc'ax. It was in this eastern sector of the plateau that we later find the region called by the Tatars *Karabagh* (Arm. : Larabal) — « the Black Garden » — from the richness of its soil ¹⁴.

Owing to the altitude of the plateau, the highest parts of Siwnik' and Karabagh are stark and almost devoid of vegetation and the villages at this elevation tend to be quite poor. Fogs are frequent and the upper peaks and valleys are often lost in clouds, but the abundant rain makes possible the growth of fine crops of grain and provides excellent pasturage for the region's numerous herds. Trees are few, here; even in summer the nights are cold and the damp is always penetrating. In the lower valleys, however, sheltered from the winds by the higher ranges and well watered by the mountain streams, vegetation is luxuriant, wheat grows in abundance, vegetables and cotton are raised as well, and huge walnut trees are almost lost in the profusion of vines which cover them. To permit maximum utilization of every scrap of land, the houses tend to be terraced up along the mountain sides, while other terraces, held up by rough stone walls, serve to

¹⁴ The notion that Karabagh, a term dating from the thirteenth century (A. K. SANJIAN, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*, Harvard Univ., 1969, p. 411), is a Turkish translation of Arc'ax seems dubious. James H. Tashjian (« The Problem of Karabagh », *The Armenian Review*, no. I Spg. 1968, p. 13), derives the Armenian name from *ard* (*sic*, i.e. *art*) « field » and *aghd* (*sic*, i.e. *alt*), a classical Armenian word for « black », referring the reader to modern Armenian *aghdol* (*sic*, i.e. *aghtol*) « soiled ». The Kouyoumdjian dictionary has *alb* « dung », « manure » and *albalic'* « filthy », « dirty », Nagorny (Mountainous) Karabagh of today forms an autonomous republic within the Soviet Republic of Azerbaidzhan and has an area of 1,945 square miles, which is considerably less than the approximately 3,175 square miles which made up the area of the Karabagh of old and which would have made Karabagh almost as large as Lebanon (3929 square miles) if the entire area of the plateau were included within its present frontiers. The population of Nagorny Karabagh in 1959 was only 165,000, 95 % of which was Armenian while the population of « greater » Karabagh, not included in the republic, would add another 80,000 people 88 % of whom were Armenians. Putting these figures together, then, we arrive at a total population for the plateau of 245,000, 91 % of whom are Armenians and the rest a minority of Azerbaidzhanis and Kurds. (TASHJIAN, *ibid.*).

Karabagh as a region does not correspond exactly to the earlier Arc'ax which Eremean (map) shows to have extended much further north. According to the anonymous Armenian geography of the seventh century (SAINT-MARTIN, *Mémoires*, II, 319-394; SOUKRY, *Géographie de Moïse de Chorène d'après Ptolémée*, Venice, 1881), Arc'ax and Siwnik' each contained twelve districts (*gawark'*). According to Eremean, the Arc'ax of that time contained 11,528 square kms; Siwnik', 15,237 (Erem. 117).

increase the area under cultivation. Elaborate irrigation systems have been devised by the villagers to divert the waters of the mountain streams to insure proper watering of the crops. The villages in such valleys are prosperous and are almost hidden behind the countless orchards which surround them and which produce the most flavorsome apricots and plums, peaches, pears, pomegranates and figs, many of which are dried in the sun for exports to other regions ¹⁵.

Life was simple for the peasants of the hamlets of Siwnik' and Karabagh. Their crops gave them their basic foods, their mountains were filled with game, their herds supplied them with wool, meat dairy products and hides. A thriving cottage industry occupied their time during the long winters and gave them cloth of wool and cotton the tools and implements of farming, as well as pottery and copper utensils. The winter months also provided time for the development of a rich folklore. Until the need arose for firearms, cartridges and gunpowder, salt was about the only product which needed to be brought in from beyond the plateau ¹⁶.

Linguistically, there was no real correspondence between the geography of the plateau and the dialects spoken upon it. The western part of Siwnik' used the dialect of Erevan, i.e. standard Eastern Armenian. The eastern part of Siwnik', however, together with Karabagh and the Armenian colonies throughout most of eastern transcaucasia and Azerbaidzhan, spoke the dialect of Karabagh ¹⁷.

¹⁵ J. DE MORGAN, *Histoire du peuple arménien* (Paris, 1918); Engl. transl. by Ernest F. BARRY (Boston, 1958), 24.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁷ The dialect of Karabagh was the most extensively spoken of all Armenian dialects until the Soviet period when the dialect of Erevan became the official tongue of Soviet Armenia. The Karabagh dialect was spoken not only in Karabagh, itself, but throughout Azerbaidzhan (Ganja, Nuxa, Baku and as far north as Derbent), and also in Dilidjan, Ałstava, Karaklis and Lor'i in Armenia, and in Karadagh, Mužunbar and the Lilava district of Tabriz, all in Iran. There were, in addition, two colonies of émigrés from Karabagh at Bardur and Ödemiş in Turkey just east of Smyrna (Izmir). The Karabagh people were quick to emigrate from the hard world of their plateau and, being much given to trade and commerce, were found as far afield as Central Asia, Turkestan and Manchuria. The Karabagh dialect has a very rich phonetic system with ten vowels, three diphthongs and thirty-three consonants. Its most noticeable characteristic is that it has the accent on the penultimate syllable rather than on the final one as in standard Eastern (and Western) Armenian. For the Karabagh dialect cf. H. ADJARIAN, *Classification des dialectes arméniennes* (Paris, 1909), 25; also his *K'nnut'iwn Łarabali barbari* (Vagharshapat, 1901), of which a detailed summary by A. Meillet appeared in the *Journal*

Ecclesiastically, the two halves of the plateau were neatly divided. Siwnik' had long had its own bishop dependent upon the Katholikos of Etchmiadzin but his function later came to be filled by the abbot of the great monastery of Tathew (*Tat'aw*)¹⁸. Karabagh, however, represented all that was left of the jurisdiction of the ancient Church of Albania and, although the population of Karabagh (like that of Siwnik') was predominately Armenian with some admixture of Tatars, it probably included many people of Albanian origin or of mixed Albanian and Armenian stock, who had become completely armenized after the destruction of the Albanian state in the tenth century. The Albanian Church had been subordinate to the Church of Armenia and its spiritual head, the Katholikos of Albania, was subordinate to the Supreme Katholikos-Patriarch of the Armenian Church at Etchmiadzin. In the days of the meliks, the Katholikos of Albania resided at the monastery of Gantzasar (*Ganjasar*) in the Melikdom of Khachen (*Xaç'en*).

Culturally, Eastern Armenia under the Meliks left much to be desired. In ancient times this region was one of the backward parts of Armenia and, although a rich cultural life developed here just prior to the Mongol invasions, little of this was left by the time of the meliks. Tathew had once been a great center of learning as had the monasteries of Glatzor (*Glajor*) and Mak'enotz' (*Mak'enoc'*). All in Siwnik', all had produced distinguished Armenian scholars and ecclesiastics but each had seen its best days by the fifteenth century, while the monasteries of Arc'ax had lost their cultural importance in the general collapse of Albania in the tenth¹⁹. The meliks, themselves, seem to have been poorly educated, moreover, for their letter to Pope Innocent XI is not in Classical Armenian but in the dialect of Karabagh and its poor style speaks ill of the standards of education available to them²⁰. Needless to say, there was no education available

Asiatique (1902), I, p. 561-571, and also K. MELIK-ŠAHNAZAREAN, *Lolac'ē Knanoc' P'anə P'ēšake* (Tiflis, 1882).

¹⁸ M. ORMANIAN, *L'Église arménienne* (Paris, 1912, 208).

¹⁹ J. MÉCÉRIAN, *Histoire et institutions de l'Église arménienne* (Beyrouth, 1965), p. 285-300.

²⁰ *Supra*, n. 2.

The *History of Albania* by Hovhannēs Carec'i (Joannes DE DZAR, *Histoire de l'Aghovanie* in Brosset's *Collection*, p. 553-562) is another example of the limited education available in Karabagh. The author of this small work (which actually comprises only chapter 54 of the *History of Arakel of Tabriz*) shows almost no knowledge of the

to the people. Nor do the meliks appear to have enjoyed a particularly high standard of living although they undoubtedly were better off than the common peasantry. Much of their income went into tribute to their Muslim overlords; still more into the maintenance of their military strength. Most of them had more than one castle to upkeep though few of these were large or particularly pretentious and we have the definite impression from both Israel Ori ²¹ and Joseph Emin ²², that some of them lived in ordinary houses.

The population of Siwnik' and Karabagh between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries is impossible to calculate with any exactitude but the Armenian Church counted 75,000 faithful in the diocese of Tathew (Siwnik') in 1910 and 150,000 in the diocese of Shusha (*Šuša*) (Karabagh) in the same year ²³. Since Armenians form most of the population of Siwnik' to this day and 89 % of the population of Karabagh ²⁴, we may place the total population at some 200,000 in 1910. If we reckon the population of Siwnik'-Karabagh to have increased at the same rate as it did in the rest of Transcaucasia during the first century of Russian rule, then the population would have been scarcely 50,000 in 1800 and probably had remained static for centuries.

Some idea of the military potential of the Meliks is given in the report of Israel Ori to the Elector Palatine dated October 22, 1699 ²⁵ :

Zach (Dizak)	10,000
Varanda	6,000
Kustahe (Kashatali ?)	10,000
Greater Kapan (with seven <i>intendances</i>)	60,000
Cicyanne (Sisian)	6,000
Guianja (Gandja)	15,000
Loret (Lori)	6,000
Guiegakony (Geghark'unik')	15,000
Zagiann (valley of the Zanga River ?)	5,000
Errevant (Erevan)	15,000
Daralaguias	10,000
Nachschavan (Nakhitchevan)	5,000

early and medieval history of his country and little or no acquaintance with earlier writers on the subject.

²¹ EZOV, doc. no. 11, p. 51, 52.

²² EMIN, 312.

²³ ORMANIAN, *ibid.*

²⁴ TASHJIAN, *ibid.*

²⁵ EZOV, doc. no. 9, pp. 35-36.

Charourr (Sharur)	(very few Armenians)
Chambe (Drashamb)	5,000
Rinjac (Grudjak)	10,000
Aculis (Akulis)	6,000
Mirgrie (Meghri)	3,000
Quietatache (Getashen ?)	5,000
	192,000

Taken together, the figures for these regions, not all of which are identifiable, come to some 192,000 men at arms and are unquestionably exaggerated even if we take into consideration that many of the regions indicated were beyond the territories of Siwnik' and Karabagh. The implications of these figures would be that the meliks of Siwnik' and Karabagh, together with the meliks of the adjacent territories in eastern Armenia, could muster far more men at arms than the number of cavalry mustered by the Arsacid monarchy of Armenia in the fourth century ²⁶. This is absurd and Ori's figures were undoubtedly intended to impress his Palatine patron ²⁷.

II. THE INSTITUTION OF THE MELIKDOM

As a survival of the immemorial social system of Caucasia, the institution of « melik » must be examined in the light of that system ²⁸. Briefly, this system was the result of one or more of the following three factors. The first of these is dynastic origin, that is, descent from, or at least imperceptible succession to, the tribal dynasts of earlier periods. This makes of the Caucasian dynasts a caste which had never « risen » from any lower social strata but which had always been an elite class, one which had crystallized even before the rest of Caucasian society had taken form. We may, if we like, picture their forebears as the warrior chiefs leading into Caucasia the proto-Caucasian migrants whom history treats as « peoples » but who may very well have entered

²⁶ TOUMANOFF, 239 ff.

²⁷ Hakobian (p. 388) puts the strength of the melikal forces at a much more modest figure : one to two thousand men each ! David-Bek raised a total of 6,628 troops in the 1720 s. (BROSSET, *Collection*, vol. II, p. 255.)

²⁸ I am indebted to Professor C. Toumanoff late of Georgetown University for this analysis of the institution of the melikdoms communicated to me in a letter dated 11 December 1968.

as many small tribal units, clans or even as warrior bands. It is this factor of dynastic origin which characterizes most of the Armenian and Georgian princely houses.

The second factor is that of dynastic *status*, that is, possession of the position of dynast or sub-king, irrespective of origin, a thing rare in Caucasia but occasionally found in Georgia where certain medieval ducal houses appear to have risen from the gentry level to become princes. Finally, third, creation by the crown — a rare and late phenomenon found only in Georgia. Since we are treating of Armenia, we may safely ignore factors two and three for all the known princely houses of Armenia were of dynastic *origin*. None ever appear to have been raised to dynastic status and none were ever created by the Armenian crown. Indeed, it does not appear to have ever occurred to the kings of Armenia to have done such a thing.

By the end of the Mongol period, however, the Caucasian social structure had to all intents and purposes been destroyed in Armenia; its princely houses exterminated, submerged by the egalitarianism of Islam which recognized no princely dignity, or incorporated into the surviving Caucasian social structure in Georgia. Only here and there, notably in the mountains of Karabagh and Siwnik⁶, some vestiges of the old princely houses survived and retained some measure of local autonomy. This social disintegration is clear from the disappearance of the old Armenian princely titles, so important in the Caucasian social system, and their replacement by one new and flexible term « melik », the very all-purposeness of which is an indication that the fixed social framework was no longer there. It would appear, then, that the title « melik » was used simply to designate any of the few surviving members of the Armenian nobility of old, who retained any kind of social position in a world which had become the world of Islam; whether one had been a *naxarar* (dynast) or merely an *azat* (member of the gentry). Indeed, as we shall see, the term was applicable to municipal ethnarchs and, in time, it would appear, even to mere village chiefs. In the case of the five meliks of Karabagh (and doubtless their offshoots) the new epithet actually designated a dynastic reality. Some of them were, indeed, princes on the basis of factor one, i.e. dynastic origin, while others, very likely, only because of factor *two*, i.e. the acquisition of dynastic status.

The history of the five meliks of Karabagh shows that the reality of their dynastic origin was sanctioned by international recognition

on the part of Iran, Georgia and Russia which were each, at one time or another, their overlords. This reality is also clear in the cases of the Meliks of Lawri and Somxit'i who were incorporated into the princely class of Georgia by the Georgian kings. The House of Bebutian, however, Meliks of the Armenian community of Tiflis, and the House of Aghamalian, Meliks of the Armenians of Erevan (and no doubt, also, all of the other meliks who existed alongside of the local Muslim Khans as in Maku and Khoy) were in no sense princely, but merely ethnarchs, i.e. hereditary chiefs of the local Armenian communities through whom these communities made their representations to the authorities of the ruling nationality. The Bebutid Meliks of Tiflis did acquire the princely title, of course, but only because of factor three, i.e. they were elevated to this dignity by the King of Georgia, a juridical procedure unknown in Armenia. Apart from the Meliks of Karabagh and those of Tiflis, Lawri and Somkheti, the remainder appear to have been merely owners of tracts of land, more or less extensive, or even, as has been suggested above, possibly simple village chieftains who had somehow managed to maintain a social position of some distinction in the essentially Muslim society of eastern Armenia. These would have corresponded, then, precisely to the *azat* or gentry nobility of old Armenia. We must be very sure, and able to prove, that such meliks were really princely before classing them with those of Karabagh. Once again, we must recall that a *conditio sine qua non* of the Caucasian princely dignity is its being part of a firmly established social system, i.e. it must be officially recognized by the state. The Meliks of Karabagh, as we have seen, were recognized by their suzerain states — even though the social system there was far from stable and firm — precisely because they were a survival of the destroyed Armenian state. The Meliks of Tiflis and Erevan had the official recognition of their *ethnarchal* — not princely — positions by their respective suzerains (Georgia in the first case and Iran in the second) but this would make them little more than hereditary mayors of the Armenian communities in those cities even though, as we have seen, the Meliks of Tiflis were later elevated to the princely dignity by the King of Georgia.

For the remaining Meliks, even if we could prove that they were more than *azat*, or gentry, there was neither the fact of an established social structure, nor that of the recognition of their status by any state. The best that might be said for them is that they *might* have

been descended from a princely house but even this would be very difficult to prove in the present state of our knowledge.

Under the rule of Imperial Russia, whose armies occupied Karabagh in 1813, the position and status of the Five Meliks deteriorated still further. Although, as we have seen, these meliks, in the sense of dynasts, may be regarded to all intents and purposes as princes, in the Russian Empire they became Russian subjects and were not recognized as princes at all but merely as untitled nobles with the word « melik » as part of their surnames. This situation was accepted by these families until the end of the Empire itself and, while such dynasts were older than the crown of Armenia — and certainly that of Russia — if they accepted the crown's decision not to give them a title, this must constitute a juridical fact of some validity. This, for example, is precisely the case with the Caucasian Khans, hereditary Muslim rulers for the Iranian government, such as the Khans of Maku, Erevan, Nakhitchevan, Shusha, etc., and the Sultans of Elis and the Khans of the Crimea, all being known in Russia merely as untitled nobility (the last bearing the name Sultan-Krym-Giray). Only two melik families (the dynasts of Somkheti and the Meliks of Tiflis) were recognized as princes in the Russian Empire and these only because they had already been granted such recognition by the King of Georgia prior to the Russian annexation. Even the rights of sovereignty clearly possessed by the Meliks of Karabagh would not necessarily distinguish them as princes for there have been in the past sovereign counts and sovereign lords. For this reason, the title *melik* is best left untranslated as, indeed, it was in the Russian Empire²⁹. Salome Aghamalian, daughter

²⁹ That the five Meliks of Karabagh were the equivalent of princes, however, and that this was recognized by the Russian Empire even though it withheld the title from them is demonstrated by two curious exceptions to the general rule. The first concerns Avan II, Melik of Dizak, who entered the Russian service in the time of Peter the Great (1696-1725), attained the rank of General in the Russian army and, according to Emin (p. 200), was « created » a prince under either Peter, himself, or under Peter's niece Anna Ivanova (1730-1740). Emin is somewhat vague at this point but he knew Avan's widow well and almost married her granddaughter so that we might suppose him to have been well informed. Probably, however, Avan was « recognized » as a foreign prince, rather than created one by the Russians. Unfortunately, of Avan's sons only one, Atlukhan, remained in Russia and, as he died without male issue, the exact status of the family in the Russian Empire is not clear.

The second instance was in the case of Prince Valerian Grigorievich Madatov (1782-1829), Major General of Armenian origin in the Russian army, who was recognized as a prince in the time of Alexander I (1801-1825). The exact origin of this warrior is some-

of the last Melik of Erevan was never thought of by her descendants as being a princess by birth even though she had married into the princely Thumanishvili house of Georgia and her sister Maria had married Alexander, brother of the last Georgian king.

what obscure. According to Raffi (*Xamsayi Melik*, p. 248), his name was Rostom and he was the son of a rich villager (*giwlac'i*) named Mehrabentz Giwk'in, who lived in the castle of Tchanakhtchi (Awetaranotz) and there exercised a minor function in the household of the Shahnazarid Meliks of Varanda. His mother's brother, Petros-Juzbaşi Madatian was *nazir* (housekeeper) in the house of Melik Jumshud Shahnazarian, however, and, according to Raffi, it was due to this small dignity which his uncle possessed, that led the young Rostom to change his name to Valerian *Grigorievich Madatov*.

According to the tradition preserved by the Melik Beglarian family (conveyed to me by Toumanoff who had it from a descendent of the Beglarids), Madatov was a kinsman of the Beglarians sent to St. Petersburg as a young man with his uncle and there, because he was a member of the House of Gulistan, was treated as a prince with the surname *Madatov*. This title was not a creation for service to the state. For that, one had to be a field marshall like Suvorov, Kutuzov or Barclay de Tolly, and it is a fact that there never was a creation of this title in tsarist Russia. Madatov, himself, is not mentioned in the official *Spiski tit. Rodam litsam Ross. Imperii*, having died early and without male issue. He must have been given, as it were, a courtesy as a *foreign* prince, precisely as a member of the House of Gulistan. In other words, it was assumed from his first appearance in Russia that his was a *dynastic* title, like so many others recognized (not created) in the Russian Empire.

But how to account for Raffi? It is interesting that the terms used by Raffi do not necessarily exclude a Beglarid origin. All he actually states is that Madatov's mother's family was of greater dignity than his father's which might well mean only that he was a Beglarid in the female line and that this particular fact escaped Raffi's attention. As Toumanoff has pointed out to me, while the term *giwlac'i* does translate as «villager», it may well have been used in Raffi's source in a manner corresponding to the French *campagnard*, in the sense of a rustic nobleman or squire. After all, Mehrabentz was said to have dwelt in a fortress. Again, the title given to his Uncle, Petros-Yuzbashi, is *nazir*, which Raffi translates as *ntesn*, but is this the meaning it had in Karabagh a century before Raffi wrote? In Georgia the high office of *Ezos-Modzghuari* (Master of the Court) was, by King Rostom in the seventeenth century, renamed *nazir*, this Persian term having the same sense. May it not be supposed then that a junior Beglarid was something like a Master of the Court or Major Domo in the house of the Melik of Varanda? There was some intermarriage between the houses of Varanda and Giwlistan at that time and Prince Madatov's real name is given as Rostom, a name in favor among the Beglarids. It would appear then that both Petros-Juzbaşi and his sister were in some way related to the Beglarids. It is stated, incidentally, in «Kavkaztsy», p. 54-60, col. I, ed. by S. NOVOSELOV (St. Petersburg, 1859), quoted in M. NERSISYAN, *Iz Istorii Russko-armyanskikh othoshenii*, vol. I, p. 122 (Erevan, 1956), that Valerian (Rostom) Grigorievich Madatov was born in Karabagh in 1782 to a family of the Armenian nobility (*v sem'e armyanskogo dvoryanina*).

III. THE MELIKDOMS

The melikdoms of Siwnik' and Karabagh date from the mid — fifteenth century when Jehan-shah, chief of the Black Sheep Turcomans (Kara-Koyunlu), established a row of tiny buffer territories along the northern frontier of his realm which ran through the old Armenian lands of Siwnik' and Artsakh³⁰. These territories were placed under the rule of local dynasts descended from Armenian princely houses and to whom were given the title « melik » together with broad autonomy under which they were allowed to govern these territories as they saw fit. Previously, these surviving princes would appear to have been known as *tanuters* (landlords), a title, which we shall see, continued to exist a century later when we hear of the meliks and *tanuters* of Siwnik³¹. The rationale behind Jehan-shah's policy is easily understood. The granting of autonomy to the remnants of the local Armenian nobility was designed to take advantage of their natural willingness to defend their patrimonies by restoring to them the personal advantages they had formerly possessed over their lands. By defending the frontiers of the realm of the Black Sheep, they were at the same time protecting their own status as autonomous rulers which another conqueror might not be willing to respect.

The rule of the Black Sheep did not long endure and within fifty years Siwnik' and Karabagh had passed to the Safavid Dynasty of Iran. Under Persian rule, this region remained a frontier zone and here the Persians set up a series of hereditary Khanates whose rulers were Muslims (some of Armenian extraction) and who were responsible for protecting the Persian Empire from Russia, Georgia and the Ottoman Turks. These Khanates extended from the Caspian Sea to the Ottoman frontier west of Lake Urmiah, but the ones which are important to this study were those between the Kur and the Arax. From east to west, these were the Khanate of Karabagh, the southern lowland area between the plateau (Karabagh properly called) and the Kur; the Khanate of Ganja, the lowland area just north of the Khanate of Karabagh; the Khanate of Erevan, including Lake Sevan and the region west to the Arax; and the Khanate of Nakhitchewan, the

³⁰ HAKOBIAN, 389.

³¹ BARKHUDARIAN, *ibid.*

region south of the Khanate of Erevan where Siwnik' slopes down to the Arax. In between this horseshoe-shaped enciclement of essentially low-lying jurisdictions lay the plateau of Siwnik'-Karabagh and upon this plateau lay the independent melikdoms. While there were also melik families resident in all of the Khanates, only those of Karabagh and, to a certain extent, those of Siwnik' were truly autonomous while under Persian suzerainty.

For a time under Persian rule, the meliks were neglected and suffered greatly in the clashes between the Persians and the Turks. In the time of Shah Abbas I (1586-1628), however, the Persians began to take a greater interest in these magnates. Their rights were extended and confirmed and some new ones appear to have received recognition ³². After the fall of the Safavids in 1722, the new ruler of Iran, Nadir Shah, continued to recognize the meliks, confirming them in the rights granted to them by Shah Abbas in gratitude for the aid they had given him in his campaign against the Ottomans in 1743. Their rule was thereby prolonged until the coming of the Russians in 1813.

The meliks possessed full sovereign rights over their subjects even to the point of life and death ³⁴. Their rule was hereditary passing from father to eldest son or, occasionally, to a younger brother, the succession being at all times subject to the confirmation of the Shah, or, occasionally, to that of his representative in Armenia, the Sirdar (governor) of Erevan. The decrees and customary law of the meliks had the effect of law in their domains. Each had between one and two thousand men at his command although, on occasion, a larger force could be mustered ³⁵. These troops, all infantry, were divided into detachments under a commander, called by the Turkish title *yuzbashi* (centurion). The *yuzbashis* were appointed by the melik and were often men of his own family. The title *melik* was reserved strictly for the head of the family, the younger brothers and sons being designated by the term *bek* which was appended to their Christian names. All male members of the family appear to have been addressed as *paron*. All female members, whether wives or daughters, appear to have been styled *xatun*, the Turkish word for queen, and addressed as *xanum* the Turkish word for lady. *Paron* and *melik* were used before the Christian name; *xatun* and *xanum* after it.

³² HAKOBIAN, 390-391.

³³ *Ibid.*, 390.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 388.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

The meliks possessed a code of honor similar to that of the nobiliary caste in other parts of the world. Proud of their descent and jealous of their honor, they were war-like and quick to take offense. Brave, hospitable, crude, devoted to their church in their own rough way; at times cruel, they betray the same characteristics which appear in the *naxarars* of ancient and medieval Armenia and which can be recognized in every work of the great Armenian historians. Reduced by circumstances to little better than mountain chieftains, the meliks demonstrate in every way, however humbly, their descent from the grandees of the old Armenia.

The meliks of Siwnik' and Karabagh had considerable strategic importance, especially the latter, occupying as they did, a dominant position on the high plateau³⁶. Their economics were essentially agricultural with some stock breeding and horse raising. The horses of Karabagh — virtually all that was left of the great herds of ancient Armenia — were a small but hardy breed of the type known in the West as *palamino*³⁷. Trade was very limited in Siwnik' and Karabagh. The mountains and oft-swollen streams made travel difficult and no trade routes crossed the plateau. It was a world of its own, cut off and shut away and well suited to the preservation of old traditions and the survival of ancient houses.

A. *The Melikdoms of Karabagh.*

Of all the various melks, the most powerful, the most illustrious and the best known to history were the meliks of Karabagh. Their territories consisted of a row of five principalities on the Karabagh plateau extending from Lake Sevan (then called Lake Gelark'uni) to the River Arax. Closely related to each other both by origin and through ties of marriage, these meliks often formed a kind of League against their common Muslim foes and hence came to be referred to as the *khamsayi melikner* from the Arabic *khamsa*- «five»³⁸. From north to south, this row of five territories comprised the following autonomous states³⁹.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ This information about the houses and various other facts about the fauna of the Karabagh plateau were communicated to me by Mr. Zaven Melik (Shanazarian) of New York, in two interviews in the autumn of 1968.

³⁸ HAKOBIAN, 388.

³⁹ RAFFI, 3; HAKOBIAN, 389. The information of the location of the melikdoms

1. GIWLISTAN (« Land of Roses »), bounded on the north by the River Thi or Kurak (Kurak-chai), a tributary of the Kur; on the west by Mt. Mrav; on the south by Djraberđ and on the east by the edge of the Karabagh plateau. The Meliks of Giwlistan were known as the House of Melik-Beglarian or occasionally, Melik-Abovian, the surnames being based on the Christian names of two meliks of the house. Their original seat was at Giwlistan castle near the sources of the Aran-rod River. Also in Giwlistan were Hořekay fortress near the monastery of the same name, where the later Beglarid meliks had their seat. Still another fort was located near the village of Thalish after which the melikdom was sometimes called.

2. DJRABERĐ (« Water Castle »), located in the valley of the River Tharthar (Terter), was the smallest of the five melikdoms. It took its name from the castle of Djraberđ, so called because it was almost completely encircled by the river. Djraberđ was bounded on the north by Giwlistan; on the west by Mt. Mrav; on the east by the stream called Thari, which flowed into the Tharthar; and on the south, by the River Khachen.

In this melikdom were found, besides Djraberđ Castle (the original seat of the House of Melik-Israelian), Kusanapat and Adamaberđ near Inn-Mas monastery, which last had been founded by Melik Adam I (1761-1780/2) and from which the Melik-Israelians ruled from his time.

Eventually the Israelids lost Djraberđ and the region was given to the Mirzakhanids and still later to the Atabegians who held the territory under Russian rule until 1854 ⁴⁰.

3. KHACHEN (from *xac* « cross ») was the largest of the five melikdoms in Karabagh. It was located in the Khachen River valley and extended from the Khachen River itself west to Mt. Sod, almost to Lake Sevan; east and north to Djraberđ and Giwlistan; and south to the River Ballu, which separated in from Vařanda. Its principle forts were the castle of Tharkhanaberđ or Hovanabar (the ancient Khokhanaberđ) near the Khachen River, opposite the monastery of Gantzasar on a high and forested mountain. Some sixteen kms. away, was the castle of Kachalakaberđ also located near the Khatchen River

found in Raffi and Hakobian has been supplemented by reference to such military maps as U.S. Air Force *World Aeronautical Chart* 325, 339 and 340 (Aeronautical Chart and Information Center, U.S. Air Force, St. Louis 18, Mo.).

⁴⁰ RAFFI, *Xamsayi Melik.*, 227.

opposite St. James monastery. Here also in Khatchen were located the monasteries of Ganjasar and Mecirank, both on the Khatchen River and Dadivank and Khathravank, both north of the Tartar River.

4. VARANDA. The territory of this melikdom originally formed a part of Dizak and became separated from it only in the first half of the sixteenth century. It seems likely that it was precisely this territory that was given to the Shahnazarid Meliks by Shah Abbas I although this is not certain. Varanda extended from the River Ballu in the north to the range called the Dizaphaithi Mountains in the south and was not much larger than Djraberd. The seat of the melik was originally at Khoghusel village (now Covatel) but later was at Avertaranotz village (called *Tchanakhtchi* by the Tartars). The fort of Askaran protected the eastern marches of this melikdom from the territory of the Khanate of Karabagh, and here in Varanda were also the castles of Aghnagh and Shusha or Shushi, the latter built in 1752.

5. DIZAK was the southernmost of the five melikdoms of Karabagh and extended from the Dizaphaithi Mountains in the north to the Arax River in the south and from the River Akera (Hagaru) in the west to the lowlands in the east although, since the meliks were essentially mountain chieftains, it is unlikely that the power of the Avanids of Dizak actually extended to the lowlands or to the Arax itself. Dizak had been a principality within the old Albanian kingdom and continued its separate existence as a principality until 1271 about the time of the Mongol invasions⁴¹. The chief seat of the melikdom was at a strong castle in the town of Togh. Here also were located the town of Tzri, famous in Albanian history, and the monasteries of Giwtvank and Ktish.

B. *The Melikdoms of Northern Siwnik'.*

The region of northern Siwnik' is an especially agreeable one, especially along the shore of Lake Sevan where the humidity is very low in the summer and the temperature remains in the seventies fahrenheit. There were three major melikdoms along the western, southern and eastern shores of the lake. Their exact boundaries are not clear, however, and not much is known of their history.

6. GEGHARKUNIK. We first hear of the Meliks of Gegharkunik in the early sixteenth century while epigraphic materials prove their existence

⁴¹ HAKOBIAN, 390.

at least as far back as the late fifteenth ⁴². In the sixteenth century, the most important of the several small melikdoms in this region was that of the House of Shahnazarian to which were subject the other melkdoms along the shore of Lake Gegharkuni (Sevan). Under Persian domination the Shahnazareans became subject to the Sirdar of Erevan but in the early seventeenth century the house achieved great favor with Shah Abas I who, in 1606, confirmed the melikal title and extended the territories of the family to Karabagh as described by the historian Arakel of Tabriz ⁴³ :

Leaving Tiflis, the monarch took himself to the region of Gegham, where the royal camp had been set up. For himself, he went down to Melik Shahnazar at the village of Mazra, of which he was the owner, and he stopped there. Armenian by race and christian by religion, Melik Shahnazar, a powerful and esteemed prince, welcomed [the Shah] as befitted a royal guest, as a devoted and loyal man esteemed by the monarch. The monarch presented him a *khalat* ⁴⁴ of fine and rich material, confirmed his title of *melik* of the region, as well as bestowing lands and villages upon his brother, all confirmed by a document stamped with the royal seal. He thus established him in his inheritance, forever incommutable from one generation to the next.

The Shahnazarian territories thus came to include not only Mazra and twenty-six other townships, but also the territory of Varanda in Karabagh ⁴⁵. Still later Nadir Shah (1736-1747) gave additional privileges to the Shahnazareans including independence from the Sirdar

⁴² Barkhudarian (*supra*, n. 11) has published the text of a document from the monastery of Tat'ew which exists in four mss. at the Matenadaran and which bears the signatures of four meliks and six *tanuter-s* of Gelarkunik'. Dated 1513, this document states that, after having examined various texts and discussing the matter with the monks, the signatees agreed to place Gelarkunik' within the jurisdiction of the diocese of Tat'ew. After a careful examination of this document and after a journey to examine the inscriptions to be found on various churches and khatchkars in Gelarkunik', Barkhudarian was able to identify three of the meliks as having possessed certain territories, and having had their seats at certain villages, south of the old region of Kamo (Nor Bayazit) in Gelarkunik'.

⁴³ BROSSET, *Collection*, vol. I, p. 453.

⁴⁴ From the Arabic *khil'at*, a kind of ceremonial robe or coat.

⁴⁵ *Infra*, p. 35-36.

of Erevan ⁴⁶. The seat of the original melikdom lay at the village of Mazra (Great Mazra) and also at the village of Sod or Zod ⁴⁷.

7. DZAR (*Car*). Southeast of the Shahnazarian domains lay the Melikdom of Dzar, whose seat was at the town of the name in a region formerly known as Upper Khatchen. These two melikdoms continued to exist until the invasion of the Russians under Gen. Tsitsianoff in 1804. At that time, the meliks of Dzar went over to the Russians, cast off the Persians yoke and eventually left their ancestral lands to settle in Gandja (Elizabethpol/Kirovabad) ⁴⁸.

8. GARDMAN. The Melikdom of Gardman was located in the district of Gardman an ancient land in the old Armenian state of Utik. It dated back to the time of Shah Abbas and here ruled a branch of the Shahnazareans. The seat of this branch was at the village of Oskanapat by which name the melikdom was often called. When this region passed under Russian rule in the early nineteenth century, its meliks remained there and continued in the possession of their ancestral properties ⁴⁹.

C. *The Melikdoms of Ghapan.*

In the late seventeenth century the term Lesser Ghapan was used to refer to a region made up of the earlier districts of Zork' (or Kapan), Balk' and Kavsakan in southern Siwnik'. In the eighteenth century Lesser Ghapan was also known as Yotnaberd («Seven castles»). Still later we hear of a Greater Ghapan which included not only the territory of Lesser Ghapan but also that of the earlier districts of Arewik, Haband, Dzaghakk and the greater part of Aghahedjk and presumably a few other regions further north. Actually there were a number of Melikdoms in this area between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries whose names and territories underwent many changes ⁵⁰. At the end of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eigh-

⁴⁶ HAKOBIAN, 390.

⁴⁷ In Gelarkunik' there were several small-melikdoms formed in the eighteenth century and subordinated to the Khans of Erevan. When this Khanate was invaded by the Turks, these melikdoms became subject to the Khans of Nakhitchewan. (HAKOBIAN, 390.)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

teenth we hear especially of four such melikdoms in Ghapan. There included :

9. ANGEHAKOT (*Angelakot*). This was a small territory comprising only a few villages and was ruled by the House of Melik-Tangean whose seat was at the village of Angehakot (or Angekhakot) ⁵¹ in the modern region of Sisian, or sometimes at the village of Brnakot. It was at the former village that Melik Safraz Tangean received Israel Ori and, together with ten other Meliks, held that secret council which designated Ori and Minas Vardapet Tigranean as their ambassadors to Europe in 1699 ⁵².

10. KASHATAGH (*Kašat'al*). was located in the old district of

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Ezov, p. 2-8, Doc. 2 and 3. In a colophon in a ms. dated 1428, a certain Sapan is cited as *Tanuter* in Ankelakut' (*sic*), under the rule of Bešken Orbelian. KHATCHIKIAN, L.S. (ed.) *XVI Dari Hayeren Jeragreri Hišsataranner* (Erevan, 1950), no. 405, p. 382.

The names of the « princes and meliks » (*sic*) who signed the letter to the Pope as well as the letters to the Elector Palatine and to Peter the Great the same year (*supra*, n. 2), are curiously written and make it almost impossible to identify most of them. To begin with, the forms of the names are badly transliterated and just as badly translated in the French, Russian and Latin versions of the documents. Only by going directly to the Armenian texts of these letters can we read what was originally intended. Thus, for the first name, which in Russian is given as Eggigaz de Pilippus (Ezov, doc. no. 4); in Latin as Eggias Philippi (*ibid.*, doc. no. 3); and in French as Philippe, fils de Hegoz (*ibid.*, doc. no. 2), only the last is correct and should be read Philip, son of Elias (*Hakizi ordi P'ilios*). The full list of names of the meliks involved is as follows :

Philip, son of Elias

Saruxan, son of Astuacatur

Safraz, son of Melk'on

Šahnazar, son of Nari Bek

Melk'on, son of Pahum

Thaddeus, son of Balthasar

Ałajan, son of Eavr

John, son of Noah

Melk'on, son of Balthasar

Suk'ias, son of Šahin.

Of these names, Thaddeus and Melk'on, sons of Balthasar, may be brothers and Safraz may be a son of one of the two Melk'ons in the list. Shahnazar, from his name, would appear to be a Shahnazarid but probably not of the branch in Varanda. All of these individuals appear to have been natives of Greater Ghapan as the Elector-Palatine refers to Ori as having come from *Caphan* and from *Naschiran*. Ghapan was, indeed, included within the Khanate of Naxijewan.

In connection with the house of Tangian, it is interesting to note that the aged Nerses Melik-Tangian was Archbishop of Tabriz, in Iran, in 1945.

Kashatagh or Kachathaghk which was made up of the earlier Aghahedjk and a part of Haband. The seat of this melikdom was at Khantzakh, now Khnatzkh, a village in the modern region of Goris.

11. TATEW. This melikdom was located in the region of the same name and was ruled by a branch of the House of Melik Parsadanian. The seat of this house was at the village of Tatew in the modern region of Goris but its chief castle was at Halidzor, near the monastery of Tatew, a fortress famous as the stronghold of David-Bek in the insurrection of the Armenian against the Persians in the 1720's.⁵³

12. BEKH (*Bex*). The Melikdom of Bekh was located in the modern region of Ghapan and was the territory of the main branch of the Meliks-Parsadanean. The seat of this branch was at the village of Bekh but, since Tatew and Bekh were owned by two branches of the same family, the family seat was, in effect, the castle of Halitzor. According to the family tradition⁵⁴, the House of Parsadanean (Parsadaniantz) had held its ancestral lands since the eleventh century. These lands consisted of some 20,000 hectares and the wealth of the family was based on the copper mines exploited in a primitive way from about 1750 onwards. The family took its name from Melik Parsadan who flourished in the middle of the eighteenth century, but if the family indeed dated back to the eleventh century then its Siwnid or possibly Orbelid origin must be supposed.

13. GHAPAN. The Melikdom of Ghapan became famous in the third decade of the eighteenth century as the center of Armenian resistance to both the Persian and the Turks and as the scene of the exploits of the now legendary David-Bek.

The story of David-Bek is too well known to need detailing here. He was an Armenian of Mtskheta in Georgia, an aristocrat, handsome, literate, courageous⁵⁵. In 1722 he arrived in Karabagh with some thirty to forty men-at-arms and from there passed to Siwnik'. Taking

⁵³ The origin of David-Bek was once shrouded in mystery and folklore. We now know, however, that he was an Armenian of Georgia, unmarried, and unrelated to the Meliks of Karabagh and Siwnik' (H. Kh. GNYAZIAN, *Azatagrakan P'aykari David Beki Glxanvorut'iwn*, Erevan, 1960, p. 79). An impressive memorial in the form of a sculptured frieze has been erected in Halitzor to commemorate his accomplishments.

⁵⁴ Communicated to me by Dr. Michel Melik (-Parsadaniantz) of Paris in a letter dated August 27, 1970. This information on the family is preserved in the unpublished memoirs of Dr. Smbat Melik-Parsadaniantz (1882-1968) who settled in France in 1906. Other branches of the family survive in Soviet Armenia.

⁵⁵ GNYAZIAN, *ibid.*

charge of the Armenian liberation movement he quickly cleared the Persians first from Sisian, then from Zangezur (the region of Goris) and Lesser Ghapan. After this liberation, David-Bek formed a single principality of Ghapan (Kap'an) from the melikdoms of Angeghakot, Kashatagh, Tatew and Bekh, which maintained its independence for nine years (1722-1730). During this time it did not have a year of peace. Directly after its liberation from the Persians, it was invaded by the Turks. Fighting from the almost impregnable fortress of Halitzor, not far from the modern town of Khapan, David-Bek held off the Turks until his death in 1728. Shortly, thereafter, the Turks occupied Karabagh and, in 1730, all of Ghapan. David-Bek's lieutenant held out for a short while with a small detachment of partisans until he was killed the same year ⁵⁶. In later years, folk legends grew up about David-Bek among the people, who made him one of their own. Some claimed he was born right in Halitzor, in Ghapan, while others placed his birthplace at Artsaki in northern Karabagh ⁵⁷. In any case, he was unmarried and left no successors ⁵⁸.

D. *Other Melikdoms.*

Besides the above, there were also melikdoms in southern Georgia — in Lori, Aghstev, and Pambaki — as well as Meliks of Nakhitchewan (in the earlier districts of Goltn and Nakhitchewan) and in the Ararat plain at Maku ⁵⁹, Marand, Khoy and Salmast, as well as the Meliks-Mushkamberian in Karadagh south of the Arax ⁶⁰. In addition to these, Raffi mentions seven melikdoms in the Khanate of Erevan including the Meliks Aghamalian ⁶¹, Geghamian ⁶², Loris-Melikian ⁶³,

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ In 1400, Ruy Gonzales Clavijo, Castillian ambassador to Tamerlane, passed through Maku, which he found ruled by a Khan who was publicly a Muslim but secretly a Christian. The later Meliks of Maku may have been of this family. (CLAVIJO, *Historia del Gran Tamerlan e Itinerario*, Seville, 1582; Engl. transl. by Guy LE STRANGE, London, 1928.)

⁶⁰ Archbishop Tirayr Melik-Mushkamberian was of the house of the Meliks of Karadagh, members of which are still to be found in New York. (Communicated to me by the grand-nephew of the late Archbishop, Mr. Tigran Melik, in a telephone conversation in Autumn 1968.)

⁶¹ The Aghamalians were Meliks of Erevan from the seventeenth century until 1828. The family survived in India and Russia, and one branch exist in the United States. In the old Armenian cemetery at Agra, India, is found the following epitaph :

Arghutian ⁶⁴, etc., whose delegates descended to the Plain of Mughar for the coronation of Nadir Shah (1743) ⁶⁵; and who survived until the coming of the Russians; in Siwnik' the Meliks Haikazian of Zangezour ⁶⁶, the Orbelians in Sisian (region of Tatev), the Shahumians in Meghri, as well as other meliks in Bargiwshat, Tchundur and

« This is the tomb of Stephen, the son of Melik Petros of Erewan who departed from this world in the 6th March 1805 » (Seth, 129).

It would appear from the use of the title « melik », that this Stephen, son of Peter was an Aghamalian.

⁶² The Meliks of Gelam, known from the seventeenth century, took their name *Gelamian* from Lake Gelam (Sevan) and appear to have held sway over the Armenian west of the northern end of the lake, probably in the Hrazdan valley for, in 1804, at the time of the invasion of the Russians under Prince Tsitsianov, the brothers Gabriel and John Gelamian in their capacity of yuzbashes, took refuge with their people in the fortress of Erevan. When Baba, Khan of Erevan, wished to transfer these refugees to Persia, however, Gabriel yuzbashi and his son Basil fled with 250 Armenian families to the village of Karakilise in Pambaki, where they sought the protection of the Russians. In 1807, the Russian government recognized the Gelamians as nobles, accepted the family into the Russian nobility under the name *Gegamov*, and granted them lands in Pambaki between the villages of Bekant and Alamly. Not wishing to reside in Pambaki, however, the Gelamians received permission from Count Gudovich to resettle with their people in the region of Gandja (Elizabethpol/Kirovabad). Two years later, we find the family unsuccessfully attempting to have the families under their administration recognized by the imperial government as their serfs. (Cf. R. KHÉRUMIAN, « Le point de vue du clergé arménien d'Edjmiadzine sur le servage des paysans en 1809 », *Vostan*, tome I, no. 1, 1948-1949, 249-251, where the reply from Etchmiadzine to the Gelamians is printed in full in a French translation. It is interesting to note that in this letter, dated 18 April, 1809, the Gelamians are addressed as *paycatrap'aye išxan* « most excellent prince » and, individually, by the Russian title *kniiaz* « prince »).

⁶³ The Loris-Melikians : i.e. Meliks of Lori, were a branch of the Meliks (Dukes) of Somxit'i (cf. TOUMANOFF, 271).

⁶⁴ The Arguthian meliks were possibly a branch of the Princes Mkhargrjeli-Agut'ashvili, later Argutinskij-Dolgorukij, one of the two subdivisions of Mkhargrjelid line, itself one of three lines of the Pahlavid dynasty which was Armenian by origin but long settled in Georgia. (Cf. TOUMANOFF, 270.) There were, however, several Arghuts in the Khaghbakid ancestors of the Israelians and this might have been their origin.

⁶⁵ Abraham DE CRÈTE (Abraham Kretac'i), *Histoire de Nadir Shah*, in BROSSET, *Collection*, 257-338).

⁶⁶ Raffi tells us (*Xamsayi Melik.*, 313, n. 1) that Shah Abbas the Great bestowed upon Melik Haykaz the title *sadr nišin*, which entitled him to sit near the monarch in the first place from the throne. Beknazareantz (205) makes the Israelids of Djraberid descendants of Melik Haykaz, which is not at all impossible and would link these Haikazian meliks to the Khaghbakid branch of the House of Siwnik' from which we know for certain the Israelids were sprung.

Ordubad ⁶⁷; in the Khanate of Ganja existed the four Meliks of Barsum, Khadjakap, Osshen and Getashen ⁶⁸. These meliks of Ganja were also hereditary rulers of their people but under the Khan of Ganja with whom they were on excellent terms. Raffi assures us that there were meliks in all the districts of Transcaucasia inhabited by Armenians including Shirwan, Shaki, Derbend and Baku ⁶⁹. Finally, we hear of the Meliks of Surmalu, near Igdir, who called themselves «Kamsarakan» and claimed descent from the princely house of Kamsarakan who had once ruled in the district of Arsharunik just across the Arax from Surmalu ⁷⁰. Also, under the Turks, we hear of certain «begs» descended from unnamed princely houses in various other parts of Armenia, notably in Hamshen between the Black Sea coast and the town of Ispir (Sper) ⁷¹.

IV. THE MELIK DYNASTIES OF KARABAGH

A. *The House of Albania.*

The Armenian province of Artsakh, or Karabagh as it was later called, was located on the easternmost edge of the Armenian plateau but did not include the eastern slopes of this plateau except in the extreme south by the River Arax. These mountainous slopes with their valleys and mountain torrents, as well as the lowlands extending as far as the River Kur formed the province of Utik'. Sometime between 363 and 387, both of these provinces, Artsakh and Utik',

⁶⁷ RAFFI, 313-314.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 313. Raffi (1835-1888), whose real name was Hakob Melik-Hakobian, and whose father was a certain Melik Mirza-bek, may have belonged to one of these lesser houses although he was born in the small village of Bayajuk, near Salmast in northern Iran. In the dedication to his *Xamsayi Melikut'iwinner*, he seems to indicate that his father had participated in the wars of the meliks which is chronologically possible. Other names, not mentioned by Raffi, but which suggest melikal descent are occasionally met with among Armenians, e.g. Melik-Karagozian, Melik-Dadayan, Melik-Ohandjanian, etc.

⁷⁰ The Meliks of Surmalu claimed descent from the ancient Armenian princely House of Kamsarakan. The Katholikos of Etchmiadzine, Nerses V (1843-1857) was a member of the house of the Meliks of Surmalu (TOUMANOFF, p. 208, n. 236).

⁷¹ Jacobus DASHIAN, *La population arménienne de la région comprise entre la mer Noire et Karin (Erzerum)*. (Vienna, 1922), p. 77.

together with Pajtakaran province further east in the Plain of Mughan, abandoned their allegiance to the King of Armenia and entered under the suzerainty of the Kings of Albania never to return ⁷². Among the local nakharars involved in this transaction was the House of Gardman, a principality in Utik' high in the mountains along the eastern shore of Lake Sevan ⁷³. Shortly thereafter, this first dynasty of Gardman was replaced by a second claiming descent from the Mihranids, one of the seven great princely houses of Iran. Early in the sixth century, the Arsacid Royal House of Albania was dethroned under circumstances which are not clear. Thereafter, we find the Mihranids of Gardman playing an increasingly conspicuous role in the oligarchy of Albanian princes which now controlled the affairs of Albania under Persian suzerainty. In 628, at the time of his great expedition against Iran, the Emperor Heraclius appointed Varaz-Gregory of the Mihranid house as Presiding Prince of Albania, an office which became hereditary in the Mihranid dynasty for the next two centuries. During this time, the Albanian polity was progressively destroyed by Muslim encroachments ⁷⁴. The Arabs, and later the Azeri Turks, absorbed the lowlands while the Albanians were killed, driven into the Caucasus and the mountains of Artsakh, or converted to Islam to be absorbed by the newcomers. In 822, the last Mihranid Presiding Prince, Varaz-Tiridates II, was assassinated and, with his death, the Mihranids became extinct in the male line. Varaz-Tiridates' widow, however, succeeded in fleeing to Artsakh with her daughter Spram and there arranged a marriage between this daughter and Atrnerseh ⁷⁵, Prince of Khatchen, son of Isaac (or Sahl) of the House of the Princes of Siwnik' ⁷⁶. In this manner, the principality of Gardman, together with the claims to the principate of Albania, passed to this branch of the House of Siwnik' which thus became the third dynasty of Gardman. In the eleventh century, the Princes of Khatchēn succeeded, through adoption, to the throne of Siwnik' but taking for themselves the title « King of Albania » (or « of Paṛisos », which was more accurate since Paṛisos was the later name for Gardman and this area was

⁶² TOUMANOFF, 132.

⁷³ EREMIAN, p. 81 and map.

⁷⁴ MOVSES DAŠXURANC'I (Kałankatuac'i), *History of the Caucasian Albanians*, Engl. transl. by C. F. J. DOWSETT (London, 1961), Book III.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 22.

⁷⁶ TOUMANOFF, p. 217, n. 250.

just about all that was left of Albania). This line of Albania/Parisos, became extinct in c. 1166 and its inheritance passed on to its younger branch, the new Princes of Khatchen who had come existence in the tenth century and had succeeded to the principate of Khatchen when the old line of Khatchen had acquired the throne of Siwnik'. This junior line survived in Khatchen into the nineteenth century.

B. *The House of Siwnik'.*

Siwnik' formed, along with Artsakh, Utik' and Pajtakaran one of the four easternmost provinces of Arsacid Armenia. It comprised a single principality, whose dynasty, the Princes Siwni, was so ancient that we have no real knowledge either of its origin or the date it began its rule in this area. The province appears to have been ethnically at least half Albanian ⁷⁷, although it did not secede from Armenian allegiance when the other more or less Albanian provinces of Artsakh, Utik' and Paytakaran did so. In the epic uprising of the Vartanantz against Iran in 451, Prince Vasak of Siwnik' disgraced his house by going over to the Persians who had made him their viceroy over Armenia about 442 ⁷⁸. Later, in 572, the Persians abetted a brief secession of Siwnik' from Armenia but this was short-lived. The dynasty becomes better known in the ninth century when the sons of Prince Vasak III (d. 821) divided their inheritance between them, the elder, Philip I (821-848), receiving East Siwnik' (or Vayotz Jor) and the younger, Isaac I (821-831/2), West Siwnik' (or Gegharkunik'). It was Isaac's son, Atrnerseh, Prince of Khatchen, who married Princess Spram of Gardman-Albania as described above, thus forming the third dynasty of Gardman, that of Khatchen-Gardman-Albania. In c. 963. Smbat II (960-998), a great grandson of Philip I of East Siwnik, assumed the title « King of Siwnik' », a title which passed as we have seen, to the younger line (Khatchen-Albania) when Smbat's childless grandson Gregory III (d. 1084) adopted his brother-in-law John-Sennacherib II (1084-c, 1105/24), great-great-great grandson of Atrnerseh and Spram. This branch of the younger line, which called itself « Kings of Siwnik' and Albania » in turn became extinct in the male line with the death of John-Senna-

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁷⁸ Yeghishe (Elišē) is our best source for the events of this period in which Vasak of Siwnik' figures so prominently.

cherib's son Gregory (d. c. 1166) who left only a daughter, Catherine (Kata). The dynasty continued, however, in a new line of Princes of Khatchen, (descended from John - Sennacherib's younger brother Philip) for Catherine married Philip's great-grandson, Hasan I the Great (1142-1182), Prince of Khatchen ⁷⁹. It was from Hasan's father Vaxtank I Sakaṛ (d. 1142) that the Meliks of Karabagh claimed « Vakhtankian » descent ⁸⁰. It was from Hasan's eldest son and heir Vaxtank II Tonk'ik (1182 - p. 1214) that the Hasan-Jalalid Meliks of Khatchen were descended and from his younger son (Vasak-Smbat that both the Shahnazarid Meliks of Varanda and the Beglarid Meliks of Giwlistan were said to be descended. Finally, we have the Israelid Meliks of Djraberd who traced descent from Hasan-Prosh, a prince of the Haghbakid branch of the House of Siwnik' and who was with Hulagu Khan at the capture of Bagdad in 1258 ⁸¹. Unfortunately, this Haghbakid branch cannot be linked directly to the main stemma of the House of Siwnik' but if they, too, were « Vakhtankian » then we must suppose that Haghbak, the grandfather of Hasan-Prosh was perhaps the son of another, unknown, son of Vakhtank I Sakaṛ, or, more likely, another son of Hasan the Great. The House of Siwnik' had thus broken up into several lines by the thirteenth century and as early as

⁷⁹ This Catherine is cited in three inscriptions at Vahanavank, in Kapan, in the first two of which she is called *Katay* and in the third *Katarin* (BARKHUDARIAN, *Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum II*, Erevan, 1960, p. 138-139).

In Matthew of Edessa (Fr. transl. by Dulaurier, Paris, 1858, p. 184, n. 2) we find yet another version of this Siwnid stemma :

« There were still other Armenian kings of the Darband country... who were pure and saintly kings who were remembered in the holy mass with other God-loving kings who were as follows : Vač'akan and Gušatak, Sewada the son of Philip, Sennacherib the son of Sewada and Gregory the son of Sennacherib who is still living as we write this book. »

Obviously, Matthew of Edessa as a source, is not reliable enough for his version to override that found in other sources. His reference to Darband is interesting but easily explicable. It must be read as Kapan, which means « gorge » or « defile » and was occasionally used by Armenian sources as a name for Darband on the Caspian coast. Here, Matthew simply reverses the process and calls Kapan « Darband ».

⁸⁰ In a conversation with me on June 24, 1969, the « Vakhtankian » origin of these melikal families was confirmed by S. Barkhudarian, whose new work containing a complete corpus of the inscriptions of Arc'ax, soon to be published, will contain the epigraphic materials confirming this opinion. Unfortunately, Dr. Barkhudarian died a few months after our conversation.

⁸¹ Kirakos GANJAKEC'I, *Patmut'iwñ Hayoc'* (Erevan, 1961), XL, p. 384.

c. 1200 the principate of Siwnik' had passed to the House of the Liparitid Orbelians, a branch of the House of Mamikonian, which had settled in Georgia (c. 876) and returned to Armenia (c. 1177). The « Vakh-tanian » descendents of the previous House of Siwnik' continued to exist, however, largely in Artsakh and especially in Khatchen, and frequently intermarried with the Liparitid Orbelians. The latter disappear from the history of Siwnik' in the fifteenth century just about the time when the surviving « vakhtankians » are confirmed as « meliks » in Karabagh by Jehan-shah and thereby given a new lease on life ⁸². The subsequent history of these five houses is that of the last remnants of the elaborate social structure of feudal Armenia and brings the story of this princely caste down to nineteenth century.

In tracing the genealogies of the five melik dynasties of Karabagh, and linking them directly to the House of Siwnik'-Khatchen we have at our disposal the information largely epigraphical, collected by Sargis Hasan-Djalalantz, last Katholikos of Albania (d. 1828) ⁸³, and by M. F. Brosset ⁸⁴; the data gathered by Raffi in his visit to Karabagh in 1881 which was largely gleaned from surviving members of the old houses and other local people ⁸⁵; the documents maintained in the archives of the monasteries of the region, especially Gantzasar and Tatew ⁸⁶; the genealogy of the Hasan-Djalalians written by Metropolitan Balthasar Hasan-Djalalian (d. 1870) ⁸⁷ and, finally, the references to the various meliks found in the writings of the historians of the era ⁸⁸.

We also have at our disposal the curious *Secrets of Karabagh* (Gaghtnik' Gharabaghi) ⁸⁹, which Raffi denounces as a fraudulent work based entirely on materials stolen from earlier authors, whose names are not given, and expanded through the addition of further material drawn from otherwise unknown (and probably non-existent works) by seven authors, only two of whom are known and only one of whom (Isaiah Katholikos) has actually left us an historical work ⁹⁰. The *Secrets*

⁸² HAKOBIAN, 387.

⁸³ *Histoire d'Aghovanie* in BROSSET, *Collection*, p. 193-221.

⁸⁴ BROSSET, *Histoire de la Siounie*, introduction.

⁸⁵ RAFFI, *Xamsayi Melik*, p. 285 ff.

⁸⁶ BARKHUDARIAN, *supra*, n. 11.

⁸⁷ Published by Raffi in his critique to the *Galtnik' Larabali*, p. 687-697.

⁸⁸ All to be found in Brosset, *supra*, n. 4.

⁸⁹ Après Beknazariantz, *Galtnik' Larabali* (St. Petersburg, 1886).

⁹⁰ Esay Ahanic' Kat'olikos, *Hamarot Patmut'iwn Atuanic' Erkri*, Jerusalem, 1868.

of *Karabagh* purports to be a translation into modern Armenian by Makar Vardapet of a classical Armenian text written in the nineteenth century by a certain Apres Beknazariantz. Raffi was of the opinion that Beknazariantz never existed and that the *Secrets* was the work of Makar Vdpt. himself and further implies that its purpose was to impress the Russian authorities, newly arrived in Armenia, with the royal descent of the melik houses of Karabagh ⁹¹. The genuineness of the sources of this work and the reality of its supposed authors are of little moment to this study as I have drawn almost nothing from the historical matter contained in the *Secrets*. What is of importance are the five schematic genealogies of the five melik houses which are found in pages 180-208 of the *Secrets* and which, where they can be checked against other sources — chiefly epigraphical — would appear to be worthy of some attention. Despite the obvious difficulties attending the use of this work and the legitimate questions which Raffi raises in regard to the authenticity of its sources and materials, there are several reasons for not rejecting its genealogical data out of hand. First of all, Raffi compares the genealogy of the House of Hasan-Djalalian as given by the *Secrets* with that of the same house in an unpublished text written by the Metropolitan Balthasar, a member of the family ⁹². Yet, although the genealogy of the *Secrets* is much more schematic and contains several errors, it is essentially correct in the way it connects the Hasan-Djalalids to the House of Siwnik'. Second, the data given by the *Secrets* on the Shahnazarids is clearly more accurate than that found for the same house in Raffi's work wherein he makes Melik Huseyin (d. 1736) a son of Melik Shahnazar I who flourished c. 1600 ⁹³! Third, the information provided by the *Secrets* on the Hasan-Djalalids, Avaniids and Beglarids is supported at several points by inscriptions in the footnotes which have an accurate ring and which tie in neatly with the unquestionably valid epigraphic data found in Brosset ⁹⁴. Fourth, the descent of the Avaniids is given in the *Secrets* in a needlessly complicated way and at one point is quite vague, which does not suggest the work of a forger ⁹⁵. Finally, the genealogy of the Israelids makes no attempt to link this house to

⁹¹ RAFFI in his *Critique*, 685, n. 1.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ RAFFI, *Xamsayi Melik*, p. 17.

⁹⁴ BROSSET, *Histoire de la Siounie, Introduction*, 179.

⁹⁵ BEKNAZARIANTZ, p. 201, n. 4.

the House of Siwnik' and the author of the *Secrets* admits, quite frankly, that he has no information on the house prior to the time of Shah Abbas. Yet, with the exception of the Hasan-Djalalids, the Israelids are the only one of the five melik houses for which we have incontrovertible evidence of its Siwnid origin ⁹⁶ — evidence obviously not known to the author of the *Secrets* and in the absence of which he clearly made no attempt to supply through his own invention. Further evidence of the essential reliability of the genealogies found in the *Secrets* will be seen as we examine each house in particular. Whoever the author of the *Secrets* was and whatever his sources may have been, he was certainly in contact with some valid information.

The descent of the melik dynasties from the House of Siwnik' is given differently in the *Secrets of Karabagh* and in the genealogy of the Hasan-Djalalids found in the writings of Metropolitan Balthasar Hasan-Djalalian. According to the *Secrets* ⁹⁷, the Beglarids are descended (through Ghara-Gregory, his father Hasan the Great and his father Vakhtank) from Smbat, son of Gregory, son of John-Sennacherib, son of Savada II. According to the same source, the Avaniids are descended from Vakhtank, son of Vasak, son of the same Gregory, son of John-Sennacherib ⁹⁸ (see Chart III).

According to Metropolitan Balthasar, however, this Gregory is made a son of Philip, brother of John-Sennacherib and father of Sakar Vakhtank, father of Vakhtank ⁹⁹ (see Chart IV).

Obviously, we may follow Balthasar's version over that of the *Secrets*. Not only does he seem to be better informed than the author of the *Secrets*, but the latter has clearly confused Gregory, son of John-Sennacherib, who had no male issue, with Gregory, nephew of John-Sennacherib (son of John's brother Philip). By comparing the genealogy of the Hasan-Djalalids of Balthasar and that of the Beglarids found in the *Secrets*, Toumanoff has solved some of the remaining discrepancies in the following manner ¹⁰⁰ : The Smbat, father of Vakhtank in the Beglarid stemma is clearly an obvious error for

⁹⁶ *Infra*, p. 36.

⁹⁷ BEKNAZARIANTZ, 188.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁹⁹ RAFFI, *Critique*, 692.

¹⁰⁰ Later dated February 2, 1970. This reconstruction has been subsequently modified by me.

Sakaṛ, father of Vakhtank in the Hasan-Djalalid stemma; and both genealogies are mistaken in listing two Vakhtanks where there should be only one. Sakaṛ-Vakhtank I is given a non-existent son, Vakhtank II, in the Hasan-Djalalid stemma, while Smbat (read : Sakaṛ-Vakhtank) is also given a non-existent son, Vakhtank, in the Beglaric stemma. That the introduction of this extra Vakhtank is, in fact, an error is clear for chronological reasons. Hasan I, son of Vakhtank-Sakaṛ, married, as his first wife, Catherine (Kata) of Siwnik'-Albania his father's second cousin, which is not impossible but, if we were to admit the second Vakhtank into the stemma, as son of Vakhtank-Sakaṛ and father of Hasan I, then Hasan would have to have married his grandfather's second cousin, which is so unlikely as to require no further comment ¹⁰¹. Further proof of the correctness of this interpretation is found by glancing at the genealogy of the Hasan-Djalalids as it is found in the *Secrets* and seeing that it gives the stemma as Toumanoff reconstructs it, omitting the extra Vakhtank, though it confuses Vakhtank-Sakaṛ, father of Hasan I, with Hasan's son Vakhtank-Tonk'ik ¹⁰².

There is a further discrepancy in the *Secrets* — one so obvious that one wonders how it escaped the author's attention. On p. 188, Ghara-Gregory, ancestor of the Shahnazarids and the Beglarids, is made a son of Hasan I, the Great, and great-grandson of the non-existent Smbat who has been substituted for Vakhtank I Sakaṛ. On p. 198-199 however, this same non-existent Smbat, still retained as an ancestor of the Shahnazarids and Beglarids, is made a brother of Vakhtank (Tonk'ik) ancestor of the Hasan-Djalalids and of Vasak, ancestor of the Avanids, all three being described as sons of « King » Gregory

¹⁰¹ The origin of this error becomes clear when we note that there was, indeed, a Vakhtank son of Smbat whose epitaph at Dadivank' is given in the *Secrets*, p. 188, n. (*Kamun astucoy es Vaxt'ank ordi Smbatay ew amusin im Nana...*). I take this Vaxt'ank to be the Vaxt'ank, son of Smbat-Vasak, brother of Vaxt'ank Tonk'ik. The inscriptions which might further elucidate this question have not come down to us. Although one must be extremely cautious in using evidence based on silence, it is worth noting that Barkhudarian (*Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum* (Erevan, 1960, *passim*) cites several inscriptions copied in the past which no longer existed when he visited Siwnik' and, unquestionably, countless epitaphs invaluable for a study such as this, were destroyed ages ago without ever having been copied. The loss of such information undoubtedly accounts for the appearance of many isolated individuals such as this Vakhtank son of Smbat.

¹⁰² Letter dated 28 January 1970.

These same three sons of « King » Gregory are also found on p. 184 where Gregory is made a son of John-Sennacherib (see Chart IV). Obviously, we are faced with the same confusion between Vakhtank Sakař, son of Gregory, and his grandson Vakhtank Tonk'ik. Even recognizing the three brothers as being sons of Hasan I, however, we still have Ghara-Gregory, a son of Hasan I on p. 188 left as a descendent of Smbat son of Hasan I and brother of Vakhtank Tonk'ik. Working together with Toumanoff, I believe that, once again, we have found a path through this forest of contradictions ¹⁰³. Accordingly, the version on p. 188 must be the correct one provided we accept the elimination of Smbat, grandfather of Hasan I whom, as we have seen, did not exist having been substituted erroneously for Vakhtank Sakař. On p. 199, however, this non-existent Smbat has been confused with a real Smbat whom Toumanoff identifies with Vasak under the name Smbat-Vasak brother of Ghara-Gregory and Vakhtank-Tonk'ik. The statement on p. 198-199 that Vakhtank (Tonk'ik) was the ancestor of the Hasan-Djalalids and that Vasak (actually Smbat-Vasak) was the ancestor of the Avanids is correct. The statement that a third brother named Smbat was ancestor of the Shahnazarids and the Beglarids is also correct except for the name of the brother, which should be Ghara-Gregory as, indeed, it is on p. 188. The Smbat, then, is only the first half of Smbat-Vasak's name which has been treated as that of a separate individual and then confused with the non-existent Smbat of p. 188, supposed grandfather of Vakhtank (Tonk'ik). In addition to these findings, we might note that the Vakhtank, son of Smbat, and husband of Nana, whose name appears in the inscription at Dadi-vank quoted on p. 188, n. 1., is not the Vakhtank (Sakař) father of Hasan I the Great listed on p. 188 to whom the footnote refers, but must be the Vakhtank, son of Smbat (-Vasak), ancestor of the Avanids.

It is worth noting that, although we are concerned here with the origins of the five melik houses of Karabagh, that it is quite possible that other melik houses in the neighboring regions were also descended from the House of Siwnik'. Certainly, there is evidence in one or two cases of intermarriage between the various melik houses of Siwnik' and Karabagh, so that many if not most of them were related to one another if only in the female line.

¹⁰³ Letter dated 24 April 1970.

1. The Hasan-Djalalid Meliks of Khatchen.

The descent of the Hasan-Djalalid Meliks can be seen on Charts II and V. The data for the Hasan-Djalalid line is taken from the material gathered by Metropolitan Balthasar Hasan-Djalalian in an unpublished work which Raffi had in his possession and which he quoted verbatim in p. 687-697 of his own *critique* of the *Secrets of Karabagh*. The descent of this house, according to Metropolitan Balthasar differs in certain particulars from that found in the *Secrets* but as the information in the *Secrets* is based almost entirely on epigraphic materials, whereas Metropolitan Balthasar has drawn upon family documents, the archives of the Katholikate of Albania, as well as upon inscriptions, I have given preference to his version on every point of dispute. Neither the *Secrets*, nor the work of the Metropolitan indicates which member of the family was the first to bear the title « melik » but it was probably Aghbast ¹⁰⁴.

Of all the five Meliks of Karabagh, Raffi assures us that only the Hasan-Djalalids were indigenous to the region ¹⁰⁵. Yet we have seen that the Shahnazarids, Beglarids and Israelids were also of Siwnid descent. The only explanation for Raffi's statement is that either he was misinformed (he does not state his source) or that the Hasan-Djalalids themselves believed this version of the melikal origins possibly on the grounds that they alone inhabited the land of Khatchen, which, as we have seen, was the domain of the last Siwnid line. The Hasan-Djalalids were, moreover, the most prestigious of the five meliks for, not only did they represent the senior line of the House of Siwnik'-Khatchen, but they had secured for themselves a monopoly of the chief ecclesiastical position in Karabagh, the Katholikate of Albania, which had passed down from uncle to nephew in the Hasan-Djalalian family from at least the fifteenth century. John, brother of Atabeg and grandson of Vakhtank Tonk'ik appears to have been the earliest member of the house to hold this office and his nephew John, the second ¹⁰⁶. Aristakes Hasan-Djalalian held the title until

¹⁰⁴ Aghbast being a contemporary of Djehan Shah who first recognized the institution of « melik ».

¹⁰⁵ *Xamsayi Melik.*, 15.

¹⁰⁶ There are broad lacunae in the « official » list of the Katholikoi of Albania for the years between 1140 and 1195 and the two Johns mentioned in the text of Orbelian

1478 and after that it passed down through the family from uncle to nephew until its suppression by the Russians in 1828. Not all the Katholikoi of Albania during this time are definitely known to have been members of the Hasan-Djalalian house but most of them were and, if all the facts were at our disposal, we would probably find that most if not all of the rest were Hasan-Djalalids as well. This ecclesiastical tradition died hard among the Hasan-Djalalians and metropolitan Balthasar, nephew of the last two Katholikoi, was elevated to the rank of archbishop by the Armenian Church and appointed to be Primate of Artsakh, a position which was tantamount to that of Katholikos of Albania without the title. The Hasan-Djalalids took their name from Djalal-Hasan III (c. 1214-1266), grandson of Hasan II and Catherine. Well known down to the fifteenth century, the descent of the Hasan-Djalalids may be traced epigraphically, through family papers and through ecclesiastical documents of the Albanian Katholikosate down to the eighteenth century when it reappears in history playing a great role in the struggle against Iranian and Turkish oppression.

2. The Shahnazarid Meliks of Varanda.

The House of Shahnazarian was descended from Shaninshah, eldest (?) son of Hasan, a descendent (probably great-great-great-great-grandson) of Hasan the Great, Prince of Khatchen (1142-1182), as can be seen on Chart II. Shahanshah received the village of Sod¹⁰⁷ as his residence and his great-great-grandson, Mirza, became the first melik, receiving his title from Jehan-shah in c. 1458 and the justice of whose rule earned him the sobriquet « Ardar » Melik Mirza « Mirza the Just ». It was his great-grandson, Melik-Bek II who transferred the seat of the Melikdom from Sod to Mazra, a large village some two miles away¹⁰⁸ and it was here that Melik-Bek's son Shahnazar I received and entertained Shah Abbas I of Iran in c. 1606. The further descent of this house can be seen on Chart VI. In this case, our inform-

are not to be found in the list during this period. Thus, between the John VI (1195-1235) and the John VII (?-1470) of the official list, we must insert these two other Johns which would make John VII actually John IX. The « official » list, however, is by no means really official; it appears on p. 412-413 of Jacques DE MORGAN's *History*, and no source for it is given.

¹⁰⁷ BEKNAZAREANC', 193; HAKOBIAN, 390.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 194; *ibid.*

ation is derived that found in the *Secrets of Karabagh*. Here, for a change, the *Secrets* becomes quite accurate, relying as it does upon rather copious epigraphic materials, and its information can be used in preference to that found in Raffi.

The main problem in this stemma is the question of whether there were two or three meliks of this house by the name of Shahnazar. Raffi¹⁰⁹ indicates that there were two : Shahnazar I, a contemporary of Shah Abbas I in c. 1606 and Shahnazar II, his grandson, who died in 1682. In between the two he would place Huseyin I, son of Shahnazar I, and father of Shahnazar II. Yet, since we know that Huseyin died in 1736, we must believe that he was still living 130 years after his father entertained Shah Abbas I. Now although this is not entirely impossible from a physical point of view, for Shahnazar I might have been very young in 1606, and his son, Huseyin, might have been born in his old age and then lived to be quite old himself, it is extremely unlikely. We know from his tomb, moreover, that Shahnazar I died, in fact, precisely in 1606¹¹⁰, so that we can only accept the testimony of the *Secrets*, bolstered as it is by other inscriptions not available to Raffi, that there was in fact another Shahnazar (II) (1644-1682) grandnephew of Shahnazar I and father of Huseyin I (1682-1736). This would make the last melik of this name Shahnazar III (c. 1775-1791).

3. The Beglarid Meliks of Giwlistan.

The Beglarids are said to have been descended from Aghbugha, the younger (?) brother of Shahinshah progenitor of the Shahnazarids¹¹¹ and thus, likewise, to be descended from Vakhtank Sakaṙ. From Brosset, it would appear that this line was originally known as that of the Aytinids¹¹², taking its name from Aytin, grandson of Aghbughe. This is borne out by the *Secrets* which calls Aytin the first *yuzbashi* (*centurion*) of Giwlistan and describes how, in 1455, he hastened to

¹⁰⁹ *Xamsayi Melik.*, p. 17 ff.

¹¹⁰ BEKNAZARIANTZ, p. 194, n. 2, where his epitaph at Mazra is quoted.

¹¹¹ BEKNAZARIANTZ, 189. In addition to this testimony we have a footnote in RAFFI'S *Xamsayi Melik.* (p. 6, n. 1) in which he states that he has in his hands an historical text tracing the Beglarids back to the kings of Albania. Although Raffi doubts the veracity of this text, its existence is further evidence for the statement contained in the *Secrets*.

¹¹² BROSSET, *Introduction*, 180.

make his obeisance to Jehan-shah at Tabriz and remained there three years ¹¹³. Among the gifts and prerogatives received from the Shah, we are told that Aytin was given lands north of the Kur including the town of Nij and its environs and that he settled there with all his family ¹¹⁴. Now this transfer of the family to Nij might be thought of as being merely an attempt to explain away a fact mentioned by Raffi (and perhaps too well known to ignore) that the first Melik of Giwlistan, Abov I (*d.* 1632), had immigrated to Karabagh from Nij in the early seventeenth century ¹¹⁵. Although this account of how a branch of the House of Upper Khatchen had come to settle in Nij may well be a fantasy devised to link the family of Abov of Nij to the rest of the houses of Karabagh and thereby to justify its presence in this region, this is not necessarily the case and there is other, incontrovertible, evidence in existence which links the meliks of Karabagh to the region of Nij. In the *History of Albania* by Isaiah Hasan-Djalalian, Katholikos of Albania (1702-1728) ¹¹⁶, there is an account of two Hasan-Djalalid brothers, Basil and Ahmed, who went to Nij with their families and entourage and settled there only to be crushed by the might of the Khans of Shemakha. No reason is given for the original migration of the brothers to Nij but, given what we know of Abov's origin having been at Nij, it is not at all unlikely that the Hasan-Djalalids were laying claim to the ancestral lands of Abov. Now, though the Hasan-Djalalian brothers may have been related to Abov of Nij through marriage or through descent in the female line, it is also very likely that the brothers Basil and Ahmed, being scions of the senior line of Siwnik'-Khatchen were simply laying claim to lands abandoned by Abov whom they recognized as a member of a junior line of their own house. The Hasan-Djalalians were a large family with many branches. It is not difficult to see how a shortage of good land would prompt two enterprising braves of the house to set forth to make their fortune in lands abandoned by a younger branch of the family.

In any case, Abov I, was the fifth of his line to bear the title

¹¹³ BEKNAZARIANTZ, *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

^{114a} The name *Avan* would appear to be a local variant of *Hovhannes* (John).

¹¹⁵ *Xamsayi Melik.*, 6.

¹¹⁶ *Supra*, n. 90.

«melik»¹¹⁷, and it was he who built the castle of Djiwanchur which came to be known as Giwlistan. His grandson, Abov II, (d. 1728) kidnapped Ghamar-Sultana (d. 1758), daughter of Mamlat', Khan of Barda, married her, became reconciled with her father and, when the Khan died, inherited his villages¹¹⁸. It was from Beglar I that the family was known, henceforward, as Melik-Beglarian.

4. The Avamid Meliks of Dizak.

According to Raffi, the progenitor of the Avamids was Melik Avan (or Egan), a scion of the House of Loris-Melik, a branch of the Meliks of Somkhit'i, who was driven from his ancestral lands in Phambaki and a part of Lori by his relative, Elizbar, and thereby came to settle in Togh village in the region of Dizak in Karabagh¹¹⁹.

According to the *Secrets*, however, the Avamids were descended from Vasak *Tagaworaz* (read : Smbat-Vasak), younger brother of Vakhtank (Tonk'ik) and «Smbat»¹²⁰ (read Ghara-Gregory). This version would make them a collateral line of the Hasan-Djalalids descended from Vakhtank Tonk'ik, and of the Shahnazarids and Beglarids, descended from Ghara Gregory. According to the *Secrets*¹²¹ Vasak was the first of ten princes (*išxanner*) succeeding each other from father to son, although his list is incorrect (or one of his dates is wrong) for he has an epitaph of one prince «Išxan son of Abas» with the date 1246, five generations after Vasak (c. 1200) and only four generations before Khumar great-grandson of Ishkhan, whose epitaph at Spitak Vank' is dated 1478. Here, once again, we have evidence of the validity of the genealogical materials by the author of the *Secrets* for his list of the descendents of Vasak is thus chronologically unsatisfactory, and hardly what one would expect of a forger. It is also interesting that, in beginning his list of the Meliks of Dizak, the author of the *Secrets* offers an epitaph which traces the meliks, not from the main line of the ten princes, but from a collateral line whose relation to Prince Avan, grandson of Vasak *Tagaworaz* is not made clear¹²².

¹¹⁷ BEKNAZARIANTZ, 192.

¹¹⁸ RAFFI, *Xamsayi Melik.*, 10.

¹¹⁹ *Xamsayi Melik.*, 18.

¹²⁰ BEKNAZARIANTZ, 201.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, n. 4.

Despite this long and uncertain genealogy tracing the Avaniids back to the House of Siwnik', the Lori connections of the Avaniids are not unknown to the author of the *Secrets*. According to him, however, the house settled in Lore in 1607 when Melik Avan I together with some fifty Armenian households, was driven from his possessions in Karabagh under severe pressure caused by the looting and despoliation of his patrimony by the Hasan-Djalalids. According to the *Secrets*, Melik Avan I settled in Georgia and received the village of Artu, in the region of Lori, from the Georgian government in return for a small annual tribute and military service to be rendered by his people. The family prospered in Georgia until 1716, the *Secrets* informs us, when Melik Avan II, great-grandson of Melik Avan I, returned to Dizak with his family after a quarrel with the Georgians pertaining to some land. No mention is made in the *Secrets* of Melik Avan II being related to the Meliks of Lori (Somkhit'i) but it is not at all unlikely that such a relationship existed, either Melik Avan I, his son, Melik Bakhtam, or his grandson, Luke Vardapet, father of Avan II, being married, perhaps, to women of the Lori dynasty.

Again, the first impression one receives from reading the account in the *Secrets* is that the story of the migration of the Avaniids to Georgia in 1607 is simply an attempt to link them artificially to the House of Siwnik'-Khatchen, while explaining how they happened to come to Dizak from Georgia in 1716. Yet we ask ourselves why the author of the *Secrets* would attempt such a deception. If his goal was to impress the reader with the eminent ancestry of the Avaniids, the simple story found in Raffi that they were scions of the existing House of Somkhit'i, which was already recognized as princely in the Russian Empire when he wrote, would have been far more valuable for his purpose than a spurious descent from a long *déclassé* dynasty of old Armenia. Then, again, the story of how Avan I was driven from Dizak in 1607 has a ring of truth about it. Varanda, originally a part of Dizak, had probably been torn from Dizak by Shah Abas I and handed over to the Shahnazarids¹²³, while Melik Sudjum of Dizak had gone off

¹²³ HAKOBLIAN, 390; Arakel of Tabriz, *ibid.* (*supra*, n. 43).

^{123a} Emin (200) offers yet another version of the origin of Melik Avan II. According to his information, undoubtedly received from Avan's widow Gohar-Khanum, with whom he was on intimate terms, Avan came to Karabagh from a noble Armenian family of Stirvan (*sic*, i.e. Širwan, north of the Kur) bringing with him a great quantity of firearms seized from the Muslims. According to Emin (201), it was Avan who intro-

to Iran with the Shah. Under these circumstances it is not at all unlikely that the Hasan-Djalalids — numerous as ever and still the senior line — might attempt to seize possession of Dizak for themselves. Under these conditions, the Siwnid origin of the Avanids must be counted, for the time being at least, as being plausible as well as possible.

5. The Israelid Meliks of Djraberđ.

The known genealogy of the House of Israelian is the least extensive of any of the five melik dynasties. Its Siwnid origin is nonetheless quite clear. In the lettre of the meliks to Pope Innocent XI, dated 19 April 1699¹²⁴, thirteen meliks and begs affixed their names to a document in which their emissary Israel Ori of this house is identified as a descendant of Prince Prosh. This Prosh, actually Hasan-Prosh, was a noted warrior who took part in the siege of Bagdad (1258) by the Mongol Hulagu Khan and whose family built many of the buildings of the monastery of Geghard (Ayrivank), where he was buried after his death in 1284¹²⁵. He was a grandson of Haghbak and thus a member of the Haghbakid branch of the House of Siwnik' first heard of in 1046 and, although we have neither the filiation between Israel Ori and the Haghbakids, nor that between the Haghbakids and the main line of the House of Siwnik', the Siwnid origin of both the Haghbakids and Israelids seems unquestionable¹²⁶.

In connection with the Israelids, it is interesting to note the names of three other meliks of this house preserved in a letter written by the meliks involved in Israel Ori's famous enterprize to the Elector Palatine Johann Wilhelm dated April 29, 1699¹²⁷. These are first, Melik Martin (*sic*, i.e. Martiros?) stoned to death by the Muslims and afterwards burnt for having retaken a certain territory from them and having returned it to its rightful owners; second, Melik Agajang (*sic*, i.e. Agadjan), cut in pieces in his palace by the Muslims; and, finally, Melik Gragan (*sic*, i.e. Garegin), beheaded by the Muslims.

duced the first complete firearms into Karabagh, the meliks possessing no more than two matchlocks each before that time.

¹²⁴ EZOV, p. 2-6.

¹²⁵ BROSSET, *ibid.*, 180.

¹²⁶ For the history and genealogy of the Khaghbakids cf. Garekin Hovsépean, *Khal-bakeank' kam Prošeank' hayoc' patmut'ean me*; (Antelias, 1969).

¹²⁷ EZOV, doc. no. 5, p. 3.

We are also informed, by the same source, that the Muslims also attempted to poison Melik Israel, father of Israel Ori. With the exception of Melik Israel, however, none of the four mentioned meliks of this house are known in the seventeenth century when the Israelid house first appears and must have lived before Melik Haykazn. In any case, their combined reigns would probably prove that the house existed some time before Shah Abbas I.

From what little we know, the Israelids were a branch of the Haykazian Meliks of Zangezur. Melik Haykaz of the village of Khnatzakh (*Xnacax*) emigrated to Persia in 1586 and his eldest son Hayk succeeded him ¹²⁸. Melik Hayk was succeeded by his son Melik Israel and the family was still living in Khnatzakh when the celebrated mission was sent to Europe by the Meliks in 1679. Thus, it would appear that this mission, which included among its members Israel Ori, the son of Melik Israel, was the work of the various meliks of southern Siwnik' and had nothing to do with those of Karabagh. It is at this point that Raffi's information becomes of value for he informs us that in 1687, Melik Isaiah (eldest son of Melik Israel) came to Karabagh on a vendetta against the principal Khan of Siwnik' and after defeating the Khan there, he settled in the valley at the foot of Mrav Mountain ¹²⁹. It was from Isaiah's father that the family took the name Israelean. Gradually, the family extended its domains and brought the local people under its rule, finally choosing the castle of Djraberd as its seat.

C. *Decline and Dispersion of the Meliks of Karabagh.*

Having examined the institution of the melikdoms, localized the lands of each, traced the origins of the various families and placed the meliks of Karabagh within the greater context of the many melik houses of eastern Armenia, it remains now only to describe their downfall and dispersion. As so often in Armenian history, this downfall was brought about by a combination of foreign aggression and treachery at home ¹³⁰.

¹²⁸ BEKNAZARIANTZ, 205.

¹²⁹ RAFFI, *Xamsayi Melik.*, 14.

¹³⁰ No attempt will be made here to treat of the detailed history of the various melikal families or of their relations with the Muslims, the Russians, or with one another. The life and adventures of Israel Ori; the scheme entertained by some of the meliks to convert to Roman Catholicism and seek aid of the Pope; the relations between the meliks and Peter the Great; the epic of David Bek; and the exploits of Joseph Emin,

In the confusion following the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, a series of uprisings, usurpations and civil wars racked the Persian Empire. During this period, a certain Turkoman named Panah, a shepherd of the Djiwanshir tribe which dwelt along the banks of the Kur, rose up, made himself chieftain of his people and then attempted to become master of Karabagh. Karabagh was a region of great importance to the Djiwanshir, for it was here that for generations they had brought their flocks, paying the meliks an annual tithe in return for the right of summer pasturage. All attempts by Panah to secure a foothold on the plateau came to naught, however, for the meliks, acting in concert, were always too strong for the Turkomans until dissention broke out in their ranks.

This dissention was occasioned by the activity of Shahnazar-Bek of the House of Shahnazarian, who slew his older half-brother, Melik Joseph, slaughtered his family and seized control of Varanda as Melik Shahnazar (III). As Melik Joseph's wife had been a Hasan-Djalalian, this massacre and usurpation led to a war between Shahnazar and the Hasan-Djalalids in which the latter were joined by the other meliks. Forced by this coalition to join forces with Panah, Shahnazar and his Turkoman ally built the fortress of Shushi (*Šušī*) in Varanda and, from there, first defied the other meliks and, then, through various modes of treachery, began to oust them from their lands. Plotting with Mirza-Khan, overseer of the village of Khanzirstan in Khatchen, for example, Panah and Shanazar secured the betrayal of Melik Allahverdi, had him decapitated, and gave his melikdom to Mirza-Khan. Throughout this period, incessant wars between the meliks and Panah ruined Karabagh and exhausted both sides. Other neighboring muslim khans entered the fray, often on the side of the meliks, until, finally, a truce was arrived at in 1760, which left the remaining meliks in possession of their lands but also recognized Panah as Khan of Karabagh. Panah Khan died in 1763 but the struggle to secure complete mastery of the plateau was renewed

are all more or less important episodes in the history of the meliks which have already been dealt with, however inadequately, in the following works : EMIN (*supra*, n. 5); RAFFI (*supra*, n. 8); GNYAZEAN (*supra*, n. 54); EZOV (*supra*, n. 2); *Armyano-Russkie otnoshenie B XVII Veka sbornik documentov* (Erevan, 1953); A. V. FADEEV, *Rossiia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX V* (Moscow, 1961); V. A. PARSAMIAN, *Lehastani Masnak'ut'yunə Davit'-beki Apstambut'yunə* (Erevan, 1962); and A. HOVHANNISIAN, *Armyano-Russkie othoshenie v pervoi treti XVIII veka*, 2 vols. (Erevan, 1964); etc. etc.

by his son Ibrahim who married Shahnazar's daughter and retained his services. Melik Bakhtam of Dizak was captured by Ibrahim and sent off to Ardabil in Iran and his lands annexed by Persia. Melik Abov of Gulistan and Melik Medjlum of Djraberđ were also captured but succeeded in escaping to Georgia whereupon Ibrahim gave their lands to others. Abov and Medjlum eventually settled in Ganja where Medjlum was killed in a rebellion in 1796.

Shahnazar III died in 1791 and was succeeded by his second son Huseyin II, who was appointed melik in preference to the eldest, Djumshud (*Djamshet*), through the influence of his sister, Hurizat, who was only a half-sister to Djumshud. This angered Jumshud who went over to the other meliks. In 1798, after the virtual reduction of Georgia to a Russian dependency, Djumshud, Abov of Gulistan and Abov's nephew Phreythiwn (*Feridone*) settled in Georgia under Russian protection. Phreythiwn received Bortchalu and Akchala with an annual pension of 1000 rubles; Abov received the town of Bolnisi and its vicinity, while Djumshud and his son Paul, received respectively, a pension of 1200 and 600 rubles.

In 1804, the Russians under Prince Tsitsianov marched on Erevan against Abas-Mirza, heir to the Persian throne, accompanied by Rustom-Bek, son of Abov of Giwlistan at the head of 500 Russian troops. Captured by Abas-Mirza despite his bravery, Rustom was beheaded by the Persians at Tabriz. Abov, himself, died at Tiflis in 1808 supposedly poisoned by the Georgian princes with whom he was on poor terms. The bright moment in this story of the fall of the meliks occurred in 1806 when Ibrahim, son of Panar-Khan of Shushi was, himself, betrayed by Djumshud, son of his father's old ally Shahnazar III, and killed by the Russians. In this way all the meliks of Karabagh had either emigrated, been slain, or been dispossessed of their lands except for the Šahnazarids, who maintained their melikdom until the Russian occupation in 1813, and the Atabegians, who were not of the original meliks of Karabagh but who held Djraberđ until 1854. The last Shahnazarid melik, Melik Khoudoud (*Xudud*), was living in 1822 ¹³¹ and married a Bebut'id princess but his exact relationship to the previous melik, Djumshud (1805-?), son of Shahnazar III, I have been unable to determine as yet. Numerous branches of the house survive : in Varanda, itself, in Erevan, Kharkov and

¹³¹ BEKNAZARIANTZ, 342.

Moscow — but I have been able to trace the stemma only of the branches in New York and Philadelphia — both represented by elderly and childless individuals — and, although I was able to link these two branches together, I was unable to trace them far enough back to link them to the last meliks. Leonid Melik-Shah-Nazaroff (*sic*) of Philadelphia was born in Varanda itself¹³². Ephraim Melik-Shanazarian (*sic*), who died in New York in 1950, lived in a large palace in Baku with his family but each year passed the summer in Varanda until the First World War¹³³. Apart from these branches, there was a Constantine Melik Shahnazarean living in Paris in 1931¹³⁴, and a Nikolai Semyonovich Melik-Shakhnazarov (*sic*) was First Secretary of the Communist Party of Nagorny-Karabagh in the Soviet period, directing the affairs of the same region which his ancestors had ruled since some two thousand years before¹³⁵!

The Beglarids have also survived. The last melik of this house was Melik Phreytiwn (*Feridone*) whose son, David, settled in India¹³⁶ and left descendents there. Another branch settled in Baku and later migrated to Paris¹³⁷. Finally, Barbara Melik-Beglarova, a great-granddaughter of Melik Phreytiwn, and daughter of Philip Melik-Beglarov, Governor of Elizabethpol (Ganja), married Waldamar Von der Smitton, a Russian senator¹³⁸.

The Israelids, Avanids and Hasan-Djalalids do not appear to have

¹³² In an interview in the autumn of 1968, Mr. Leonid Melik-Shah-Nazaroff (*sic*) explained that his great-grandfather had been the Dawit'-bek Caturean *i tanec' Melik Shanazar* (in Persian : Myr Davud-Zadur) who had been Iranian ambassador to France in 1813 but could not tell me how his line was linked to the last melik nor explain the origin of the surname *Caturean*, unless it is short for *Astuacatur*.

¹³³ Information on the New York branch of the family was communicated to me by Mr. Zaven Melik in two interviews in the autumn of 1968.

¹³⁴ An article on the folk medicine of Karabagh by Constantine Melik-Shahnazarian appeared in *Handes Amsorya* 3-4 (Vienna, 1931), p. 246.

¹³⁵ *Who's Who in the U.S.S.R.*, 1965.

¹³⁶ Mesrovb J. SETH, *Armenians in India* (Calcutta, 1937), 178, 309.

¹³⁷ *Who's Who in France*, 1965-1966.

¹³⁸ Raffi (*Xamsayi Melik.*, 203, n. 1) reports that when he visited Karabagh in 1881, he found the Baglarids still in possession of a considerable amount of their ancestral lands in Giwlistan. These lands included at that time some eighteen villages — seventeen Armenian and one inhabited by Russian sectarians (Molokani) — and comprised some 100,000 *desiatins*. Since Raffi's visit occurred after the abolition of serfdom these villagers probably held the status of tenant farmers.

survived, unless there are scions left in the Soviet Union. The last Israelid melik was Melik Adam II (*b.c.* 1785) who left a single daughter Shar-naz (*sic*)¹³⁹. As we have seen, the Israelids lost Djaberd as a result of the wars with Ibrahim-Khan, Adam II settled in Ganja¹⁴⁰, and Ibrahim-Khan had given Djaberd to the pro-muslim Allahverdi I *yuzbashi*, a servitor of Adam I, Melik of Djaberd. His house only held the area for a short time, however, his great-grandson, Rovshan moving to Nukha, north of the River Kur¹⁴¹. This left Djaberd without a ruler again so Ibrahim's son, Mehti Khan, gave the melikdom to Vani *yuzbashi* Atabegian, son of a goldsmith, Harutiwn of Kspat, who, although only an artisan, was said to be of noble ancestry. Melik-Vani reigned for forty-two years (1812-1854) and left four sons but he was the only member of the Atabegians to bear the title « melik »¹⁴².

The last Avamid melik was Abas, great-grandson of Melik Avan II. One branch of the family was forced to embrace Islam¹⁴³ and this line continued to exist in Karabagh until at least as late as 1881 when Raffi¹⁴⁴ visited the region¹⁴⁵.

As for the Hasan-Djalalids, although the Katholikate of Albania was suppressed by the Russians in 1828, owing to its unimportance¹⁴⁶, the last two Katholikoi, John X (1763-1786) and Sargis II (1794-1815) had six brothers each of whom had left a numerous progeny by the middle of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, I have been unable

¹³⁹ RAFFI, *Xamsayi Melik.*, 158.

¹⁴⁰ RAFFI, *Xamsayi Melik.*, 227.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 174, n. 1. A Khudadud Melik-Aslanov, a Muslim of Azerbaidzhan, was Minister of Transportation in the short-lived Transcaucasian Republic in 1918, and later was Minister of Ways and Communications in the Azerbaidzhani Republic (R. G. HOVANNISIAN, *Armenia on the Road to Independence 1918*, Berkeley, 1967). He may possibly have been a scion of the Muslim line of the Avamids through Aslan-beg.

¹⁴⁴ Raffi (*Xamsayi Melik.*, p. 174) links the princes Sumbatov and Malikov and the Hayrapetian family — all in Russia — to yet another branch of the Avamids which had remained Christian.

¹⁴⁵ In the Russian Empire the melik houses were recognized as untitled gentry with the word « melik » as part of the name and, thus, we have the families of Melik-Avanov, Melik-Beglyarov Melik-Shakhnazarov, Melik-Isaev (the Israelids) and Melik-Gasan-Jalalov, as well as the families of Melik-Agamalov and Melik-Gegamov. The Russian forms of the first five names, I found in the papers of the late Ephraim Melik-Shanazarian, which were shown to me by his son Mr. Zaven Melik of New York.

¹⁴⁶ ORMANIAN, 117.

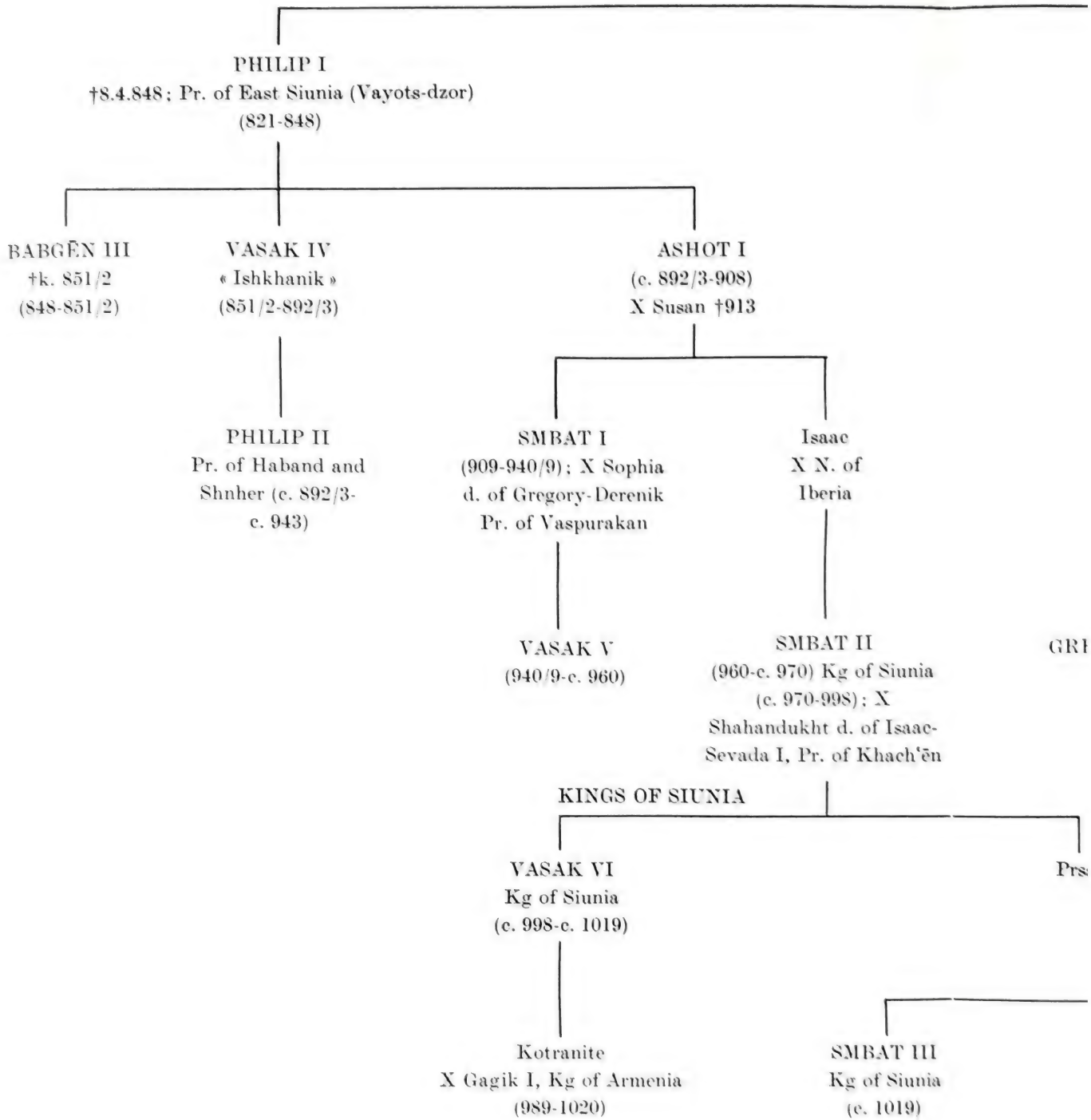
to trace any survivors of this house, although there was an artist, Eleanora Hasan-Djalalean, residing in Erevan as a young woman at the turn of the century ¹⁴⁷.

The material on the origin of the meliks contained in the preceding paragraphs, as well as the information found in the accompanying genealogical tables, cannot be considered either complete or entirely accurate; too much remains still in doubt and not every source was available to me. What is found here is as complete a study of the subject as has yet been presented in the West. It is offered to the scholarly public as a starting point for further investigation into the various questions raised, and it is hoped that it will encourage the publication of various materials as yet available only in manuscript form.

Robert H. HEWSEN.

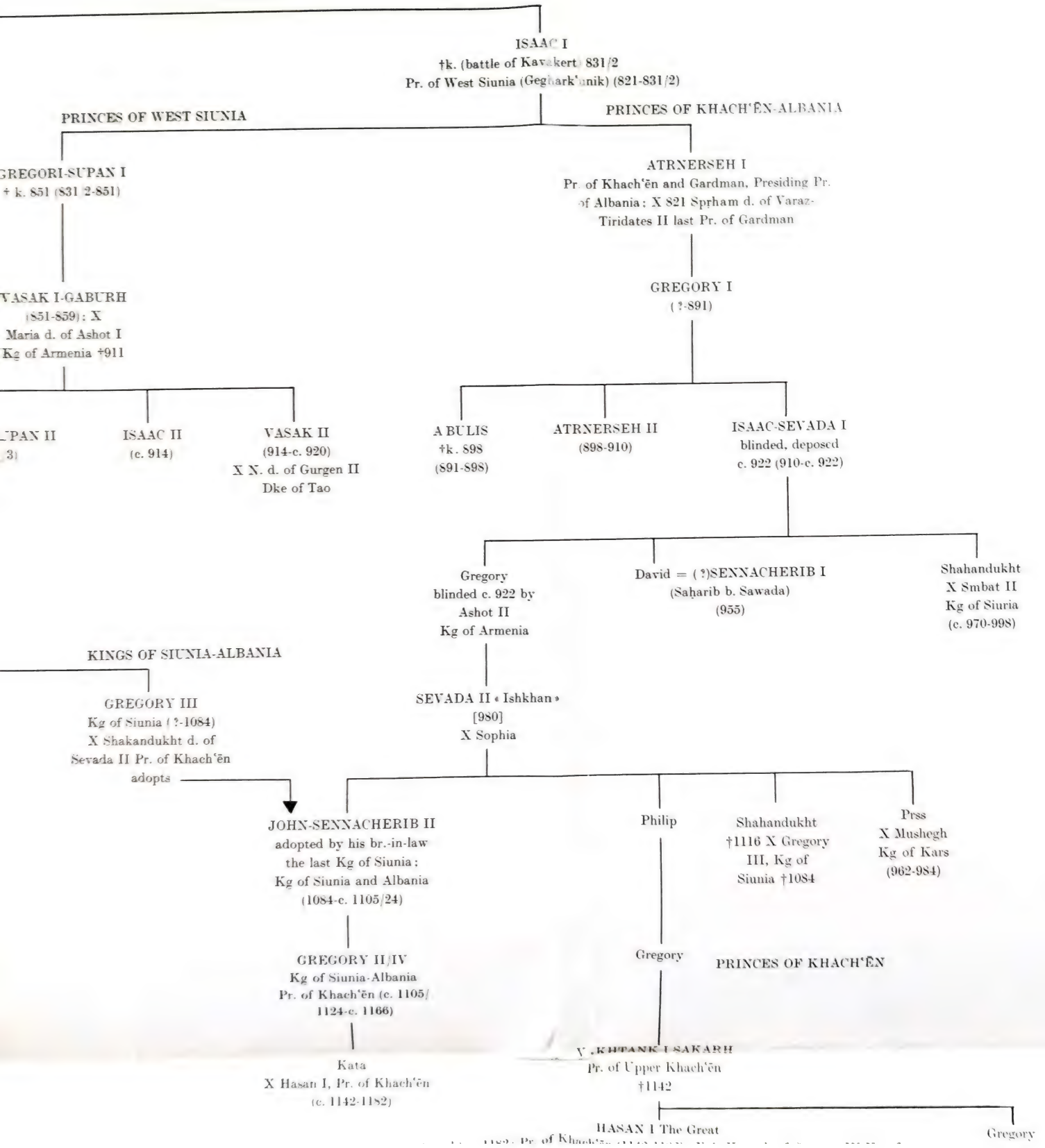
¹⁴⁷ As this study goes to press, I have been informed by Toumanoff (letter dated 12 December, 1972) of the Siwnid descent of the Bavarian house of von Aretin, whose ancestor, Johann Baptist Christoph Aroutiun Saziadur, born in Constantinople 24 June 1706, was brought to Bavaria by the Electress Theresa Cunigunde, wife of the Elector Maximilian II (1726). This ancestor is described as « Sohn des armenischen kleinkönigs Bagdasar von Siounik und s. Gemahlin Gogza a. des Haus der Fürsten von Charabagh ». It seems difficult to doubt that the appearance of such an individual in Bavaria early in the eighteenth century is in some way connected with the activities of Israel Ori or of David Bek. That this Johann Baptist (*Hovhannes Mkrtic'* or simply *Mkrtic'*?) was born in Constantinople a few years after Ori's embassy to the Pope is interesting, especially in the light of the fact that two of the signates of the letter he carried with him are described as *Bagdasari ordi* (*supra* n. 52). Given the predilection of Armenians for naming at least one son after his grandfather, might we not suppose that « Bagdasar », father of Johann Baptist, was a son of one of the two sons of Baghdasar (Thaddeus or Melkon) who signed the letter to the Pope? This younger Baghdasar may have journeyed with Ori on his embassy to Rome and stopped off in the Ottoman capital or he may have left Siwnik' a few years after. It is interesting that the von Aretins have the privilege of a royal crown over their coat of arms, rather than a baronial one. As for the surname *Saziadur*, it may be connected with the *Caturean* of David Bek *Caturean i tanec' Melik Šahnazar* (*supra*, n. 132). *Kleinkönig*, by the way, is a good translation of « Melik ».

PRINCES OF EAST SIUNIA



A (SCHEMATIC TO HASAN I)

II
Siunia



KINGS OF SIUNIA-ALBANIA

nite
of Armenia
(20)

SMBAT III
Kg of Siunia
(c. 1019)

GREGORY III
Kg of Siunia (?-1084)
X Shakandukht d. of
Sevada II Pr. of Khach'ën
adopts

SEVADA II e Ia
[980]
X Sophia

JOHN-SENNACHERIB II
adopted by his br.-in-law
the last Kg of Siunia;
Kg of Siunia and Albania
(1084-c. 1105/24)

GREGORY II/IV
Kg of Siunia-Albania
Pr. of Khach'ën (c. 1105/
1124-c. 1166)

Kata
X Hasan I, Pr. of Khach'ën
(c. 1142-1182)

(monk) p. 118:
Siunia and Al

2. —

II TONK'IK
d. of K'urd Pr. Artsruni-Manka-
d. of Sargis II Pr. of Mkhargrdzeli

Qara-Gregory
X Susan-Dop' d. of Sar-
gis II Pr. of Mkhargrdzeli

HASAN II
X Semp'an-
hahik * Kg of Baghk'*

Zacharias
X Khorhisah
(Khoch'agh?)
d. of Vasak (Smbat?) Pr. of
Siunia-Khach'ën

John Daula Maria

Gregory
Bp of Haghpat
and Sanahin
[1281-1291]

Hasan
X Mamk'an d. of K'urd
Pr. of Artsruni-Mankaberdeli [12

John VII
Katholikos
of Albania

Mama-Khat'un

Uknas
(Prss)

Rhuzukan
[1261]
X Bugha
s. of Chormaghan
Noyon

Mina-Khar'un
† 1296;
X Tarsayich
Pr. of Siunia

Gregory
1317 X Asp'a d. of Tarsayich Orbelid
Pr. of Siunia + 1312

John

Vahram

Bastam
[1343-1371]

Mejlis

Hasan

Vardan
Priest
[1343-1371]

Vakhtank

Sargis

At'abeg

Hasan

MELIKS
IN

Avtin
[1447]

Khimshe
[1447]

Shahinshah

Aghbughe

Jah

Ulu-Bek

Tarsun

Seti

Prosh

Gregory

Hasan

F

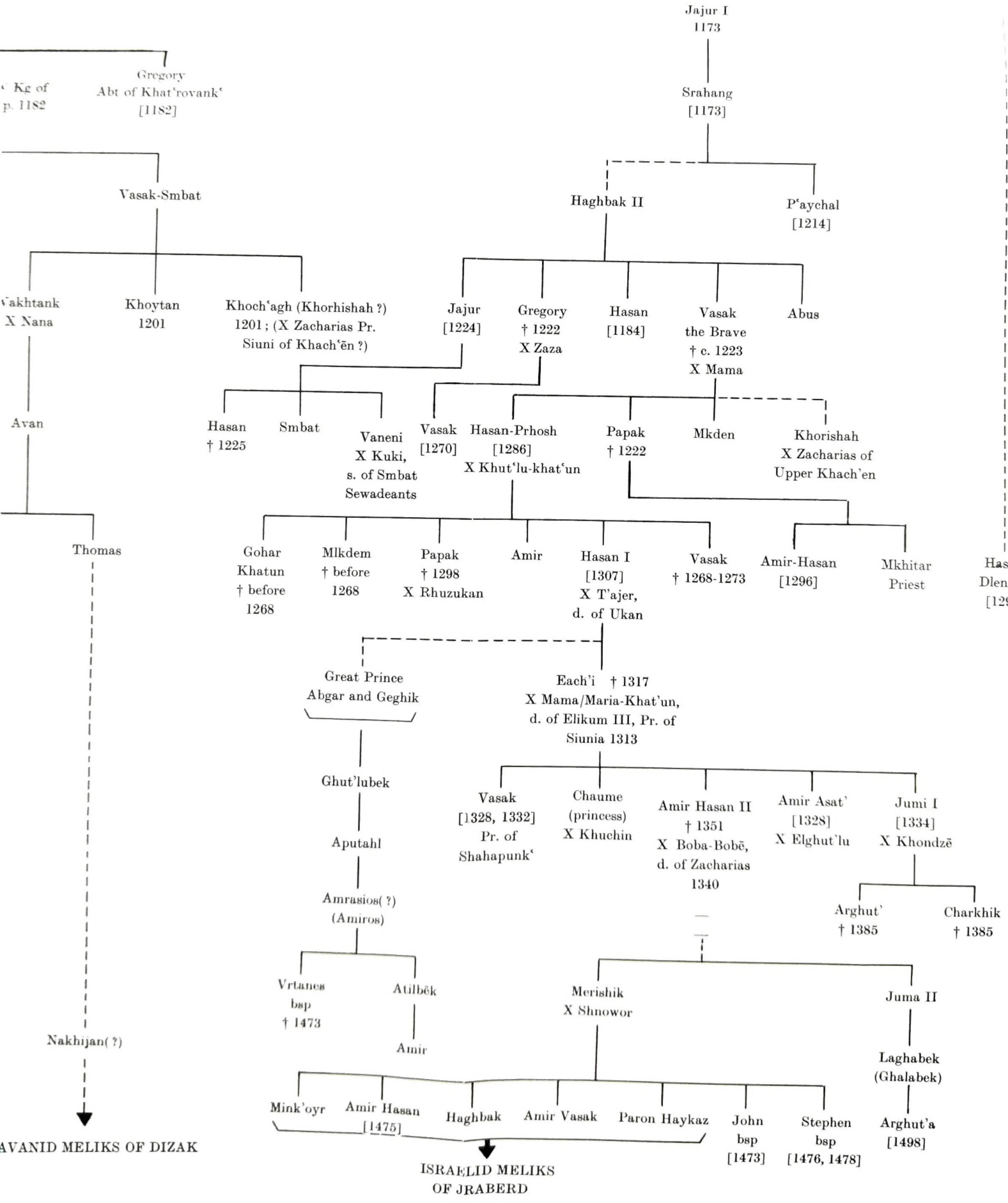
Hakhnazar

Aytin
[1458]

S

Abov

Ghara-Hasan



1. —
2. —

VAKHTANK II TONK'IK
(1182-p. 1214); X 1. Aruz-Khat'un d. of K'urd Pr. Artsruni-Mankaberdeli; X 2. T'sunt'a-Khorhishah d. of Sargis II Pr. of Mkhargrdzeli

Qara-Gregory
X Susan-Dop' d. of Sargis II Pr. of Mkhargrdzeli

Hasan
† before
1214

Gregory
† before
1214

JALAL-DATLA-HASAN II
(c. 1214-1266) * Kg of Artsakh *; X Semp'an-Mank'an d. of N. Arhanshahik * Kg of Baghik *
X Khorhishah (Khoct'agh?)
d. of Vasak (Smhat?) Pr. of Stunna-Khach'en

Zacharias
X Khorhishah

John
Daula
Maria

Gregory
Bp of Haghpot and Sanahin
[1281-1291]

Hasan
X Mank'an d. of K'urd Pr. of Artsruni-Mankaberdeli
[1285]

John
Priest
[1285]

At'abeg I
(1266-c. 1306)

John VII
Katholikos
of Albania

Manna-Khat'un

Ukhus
(Prss)

Rhuzukan
[1291]
X Bagha
s. of Chornaghyan
Noyon

Mina-Khat'un
† 1296;
X Tarsayich
Pr. of Stunna

Gregory
1317 X Asp'a d. of Tarsayich Orbedil
Pr. of Stunna + 1312

JALAL
(1306-c. 1311)

John

Vahram

John VIII
Katholikos
of Albania

Aghbast
[1343-1371]

Basram
[1343-1371]

Mejlis

Hasan

Yardan
Priest
[1343-1371]

Yakhtank

At'abeg

Sargis

HASAN-JALALID MELIKS
OF KHACH'EN

Shahinshah

Aghbughe

Jahanshah

Ulu-Bek

Tarsun

Seti

Prosh
Gregory
Hasan

Hasan
Hasan

Hakhnazar

Aytin
[1438]

Ghara-Hasan
centurion

Vardan

Shanshe

Abov

Ghara-Hasan
centurion

Vardan

David

SHAHNAZARID MELIKS
OF VABHANDA

BEGLARID MELIKS
of GIVLUSTAN

at
l. Kata d. of Gregory IV Kg of
tit. Kg of Lori + (nun) p. 1182

Gregory
Abt of Khat'rovank'
[1182]

1173

Srahang
[1173]

Vasak-Smbat

Haghbak II

P'aychal
[1214]

Vakhtank
X Nana

Khoytan
1201

Khoeh'agh (Khorhishah ?)
1201; (X Zacharias Pr.
Siuni of Khach'en ?)

Jajur
[1224]

Gregory
† 1222
X Zaza

Hasan
[1184]

Vasak
the Brave
† c. 1223
X Mama

Abus

Avan

Hasan
† 1225

Smbat

Vaneni
X Kuki,
s. of Smbat
Sewadecants

Vasak
[1270]

Hasan-Prhosh
[1286]
X Khut'lu-khat'un

Papak
† 1222

Mkden

Khorishah
X Zacharias of
Upper Khach'en

Jabrazel

Thomas

Gohar
Khatun
† before
1268

Mlkdem
† before
1268

Papak
† 1298
X Rhuzukan

Amir

Hasan I
[1307]
X T'ajer,
d. of Ukan

Vasak
† 1268-1273

Amir-Hasan
[1296]

Mkhitar
Priest

Great Prince
Abgar and Geghik

Each'i † 1317
X Mama/Maria-Khat'un,
d. of Elikum III, Pr. of
Siunia 1313

Ghut'lubek

Vasak
[1328, 1332]
Pr. of
Shahapunk'

Chaume
(princess)
X Khuchin

Amir Hasan II
† 1351
X Boba-Bobē,
d. of Zacharias
1340

Amir Asat'
[1328]
X Elghut'lu

Jumi I
[1334]
X Khondzē

Aputahl

Amrasios(?)
(Amiros)

Arghut'
† 1385

Charkhi
† 1385

Vrtanes
bsp
† 1473

Atilbēk

Amir

Merishik
X Shnowor

Juma II

Laghabeq
(Ghalabek)

Mink'oyr

Amir Hasan
[1475]

Haghbak

Amir Vasak

Paron Haykaz

John
bsp
[1473]

Stephen
bsp
[1476, 1478]

Arghut'a
[1498]

AVANID MELIKS OF DIZAK

ISRAELID MELIKS
OF JRABERD